Hairstory: Exploring Coloured Students' Experiences and Expression of Identity at a Historically White Institution

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DECLARATION

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own original work, that I am the authorship owner thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Signature:

Date: December 2021

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The Lord will fulfil his purpose for me;
Your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever.
[You did not] forsake the work of your hand
Psalm 138:8

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DEDICATION

To my Oupa

Oom Harry Ceasar

Since day one, you have always loved me unconditionally. You believed in me even when no one could see any potential. Victories and achievements would have been much sweeter if you were to experience them with me. But, even in death, you remain my biggest fan and the best grandfather a child could ever have. I think I made you proud and promise you that I will continue to honor our family name for as long as I can *want, ek is mos darem 'n Ceasar.*

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Dirkie Koopman

Curt Sedras

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ABSTRACT

People make use of different markers and symbols that serve as an embodiment of who they are, whether it be ethnic, social, political, or individual. For some, their identity is expressed through physical, or external markers (Gonzales, 2019). For those classified as Coloured within the apartheid engineered racial hierarchy, social mobility was typically greater than for black people, because they had external markers closer to that of white people. The present research examined whether and in what ways students who identify as Coloured ascribe to whiteness at a Historically White Institutions (HWI) today, particularly concerning embodied markers of identity, and what factors contribute to their decision to ascribe to or reject whiteness. More specifically, this study gives a phenomenological account of the experiences of ten (10) self-identifying Coloured students at Stellenbosch University and describes the bidirectional interaction between their external features (hair texture and skin colour) and the construction of their identity in a space still characterized by a white cultural ethos. Based on the analysis of the data, the study identified three major themes: (i) Existing in a predominantly white space, (ii) Hairarchy (a specific kind of hierarchy that affords social status to a person of colour based on their hair texture), and (iii) Transition into true self. The findings show that Coloured students appear to experience pressure to appropriate whiteness through alternation and assimilation, thereby gaining social capital for a better social experience. They also realise, however, that the pursuit to be white is unattainable and could cause an internal conflict in the self, or double consciousness (Du Bois, 1903; Molinsky, 2007). Some resolved this ambiguity in their identity through a critical reflection of the value systems that imbued their upbringing and by embracing their natural hair, also described as “going natural”, which facilitated a transition into the perceived true self. I contend that an inability to critically engage with subjects like hair prejudice, colourism, and historical pain that could be perpetuated through external markers within Coloured communities and white spaces could add further contention to an already complex social identity.

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Keywords: *Coloured identity; external markers of identity; hair; going natural; colourism; hairarchy; historically white institution; memory and trauma*

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OPSOMMING

Mense gebruik verskillende merkers en simbole wat dien as beliggaming van wie hulle is; hetsy dit etnies, sosiaal, polities of individueel is. Vir sommige word hulle identiteit deur fisiese of eksterne merkers uitgedruk (Gonzales, 2019). Diegene wat as kleurling binne die apartheidsrashiërargie geklassifiseer is, het oor die algemeen oor meer sosiale mobiliteit beskik as swart mense, omdat hulle eksterne merkers nader aan dié van wit mense was. Die huidige navorsing ondersoek of en op watter maniere studente, wat as bruin identifiseer, tans witheid aan ’n histories wit instelling (HWI) onderskryf, veral met betrekking tot beliggaamde identiteitsmerkers, en watter faktore tot hulle besluit om witheid te onderskryf of te verwerp, bydra. Meer spesifiek bied hierdie studie ’n fenomenologiese verslag oor die ervarings van tien (10) studente aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch, wat as bruin selfidentifiseer, en beskryf dit die tweerigting-interaksie tussen hulle eksterne kenmerke (haartekstuur en velkleur) en die konstruksie van hulle identiteit in ’n ruimte wat steeds deur ’n wit kulturele etos gekenmerk word. Die studie het drie hooftemas op grond van die ontleding van die data geïdentifiseer: (i) bestaan in ’n oorwegend wit ruimte; (ii) haarrangorde (’n spesifieke soort hiërargie wat sosiale status aan mense van kleur verleen op grond van hulle haartekstuur); en (iii) oorgang tot die ware self. Die bevindings dui aan dat bruin studente wel druk ervaar om witheid deur verwisseling en assimilasie toe te eien, en daardeur sosiale kapitaal vir ’n beter sosiale ervaring op te bou. Hulle besef egter ook dat die strewe na wit wees onbereikbaar is en interne konflik in die self, of dubbele bewussyn (Du Bois, 1903; Molinsky, 2007), veroorsaak. Sommige het hierdie dubbelsinnigheid in hulle identiteit opgelos deur ’n kritiese oorweging van die waardestelsels wat hulle opvoeding deurdrenk het en deur hulle natuurlike hare te aanvaar (ook beskryf as “natuurlik gaan”), wat ’n oorgang tot die ware self gefasiliteer het. Ek voer aan dat ’n onvermoë om krities om te gaan met onderwerpe soos haarvooroordeel, kleurisme en historiese pyn wat deur eksterne merkers in bruin gemeenskappe en wit ruimtes laat voortbestaan word, steeds verdere stryd sal toevoeg tot ’n reeds komplekse sosiale identiteit.

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Sleutelwoorde: bruin identiteit; eksterne merkers van identiteit; hare; natuurlik gaan; kleurisme; haarrangorde; histories wit instelling; geheue en trauma

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GLOSSARY

Assimilation happens when an individual or group gives up their own cultural identity and becomes absorbed into the host culture (Berry, 2005). The assimilated individual or group does not maintain their own cultural identity and may seek regular interaction with dominant cultures. Assimilation is evident in changes in language preference, adoption of dominant groups' attitudes and values, and membership in social groups and institutions (Berry, 2005).

Cross-cultural code-switching is the act of purposefully altering behaviour to be considered appropriate and to accommodate the cultural norms in a particular social settings (Molinsky, 2007).

Coloured it a term used to describe people of mixed ancestry as opposed to 'pure white' and 'pure black' according to the Population Registration Act of 1950, in addition to external features largely reliant on the markers of race, such as having a fairer complexion and softer or better hair texture (than black people) (Dannhauser, 2006; Posel, 2011). Coloured also refers to people who are bound together by historical forces and events in time rather than by a common ethnic identity (Adhikari, 2005; Brown, 2000; Erasmus, 2001; Richards, 2017).

Colourism (skin tone bias) refers to the "prejudicial or preferential treatment of same-race people based solely on their colour" (Norwood, 2015, p. 586).

Cultural Capital are "instruments for the appropriation of symbolic wealth socially designated as worthy of being sought and possessed" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 488).

Creolization is the cultural creativity process of borrowing from other cultures in creating identity under specific conditions of marginality (Erasmus, 2001).

Historically White Institutions (HWIs) are tertiary institutions in South Africa whose "histories, traditions, symbols, stories, icons, curriculum, and processes were all designed by whites, for whites, to reproduce whiteness via a white experience at the exclusion of others who, [since pre-1994], have been allowed in such spaces" (Brunsma, Brown, & Placier, 2012, p.719). These institutions continue to be marked by a white cultural ethos, are often populated by a white student majority, and serve as reservoirs for white supremacy (Brunsma et al., 2012; Reddy, 2004; Steyn, 2016).

Social Whitening is an escape from what one lacks in an attempt to create a better social existence in a context that values whiteness as a "synonym for progress, civilization, and beauty" (Viveros Vigoya, 2015, p.497).

Whiteness is a "multidimensional construct that envelopes racial attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, and experiences most prevalently, but not exclusively, related to [w]hite people and the privileged position [white] people embody in a racially hierarchical society." Whiteness is also a "category of positional superiority that exists in juxtaposition to 'non-whiteness' (Bablak et al., 2016, p. 57).

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

While a person's racial identity is malleable, fluid, and not biologically determined, for some, this identity is linked to and performed through external bodily markers, such as skin tone and hair texture (Gonzales, 2019; Richeson & Sommers, 2016). Although these external markers carry no biological meaning, people or systems use them to ascribe a racial identity to a person, which may be instrumental in deciding their social fate. In highly unequal, hierarchical societies, external identity markers may determine a person's worth and social status.

In September 2020, pharmaceutical company Clicks and hair care brand Tresemmé posted an advert that essentially described people of colour's hair as inferior to white people. The online advert captioned women of colour's hair as dull, frizzy, damaged, and dry, — while white women's hair was captioned as fine, flat, and normal. The incident resulted in outrage, sparked public and political debate as South Africans took to social media to voice their outrage and concerns, calling the advert racist and white supremacist. The advert's message was deemed as communicating that white is right, normal, and beautiful. In opposing arguments, others called people of colour hypocrites by highlighting their dislike, disdain, level of (dis)satisfaction and feelings of inferiority because of their natural hair. Many regarded the issue as deeper than just an advertisement blunder because it is not just about hair. The images of the advert offered people of colour (women in particular) to buy another racialised experience, the white experience, at an unconscious level (Maart, 2020). More than twenty years into democracy, this advert is a testament to the struggles that many people of colour still face regarding their natural hair texture and skin colour, particularly how it is perceived and often shaped by society at large.

The public response to the Clicks hair controversy reflected the continued bias that society still has regarding aesthetics. In addition, it lays bare the difficulties that people of

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colour have to navigate concerning race and external markers of identity, especially the effect these have on identity performance and construction in democratic South Africa (Mbatha, 2017). Notably, the yardstick for social status, morality, and beauty has historically been influenced by whiteness, a racial discourse that affords undue structural, material, and political privileges to white people (Erasmus, 2000; Majali et al., 2017). It is, therefore, not difficult to understand why people of colour may assimilate towards white benchmarks of beauty or acceptability. Both the advert and the reaction from South Africans invoke calls for further exploration of the role that aesthetics, especially regarding hair and skin tone, still play in the experiences of people of colour and the measure of whiteness as a standard that still influences identity formation.

Racialized sociocultural factors have dominated identity formation in South Africa. Especially during apartheid, an era in which the construction of race was used to justify legal discrimination against “non-white citizens”, identities were policed along colour and hairlines (Posel, 2011; Ratele & Duncan, 2003). Classifications were radicalised, creating hierarchies guided by white superiority, where race and value were measured by genealogies of descent and observable phenotypes informed by pseudo-biology. The engineered racial hierarchy also stipulated the level of discrimination and oppression that people of colour had to endure, and the privileges white people experienced (Adhikari, 2005; Holtzman, 2018). The internalisation of white, Eurocentric standards has created hierarchies based on physical appearances, which resulted in the social construction of caste systems based on skin colour and hair texture (Majali et al., 2017; Telles et al., 2015). In more ambiguous and contested cases, officials used assessments like the nail test, genitalia test, and the more notorious pencil test to determine the boundaries between white and non-white (Posel, 2011).

The pencil test, designed and administered by the apartheid government, was used to test the texture of a person’s hair to determine what racialised identity a person should be given if they do not look convincingly white. This test of inserting a pencil into people of

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colour's hair and seeing whether it falls out or not was a process influenced mainly by myths, racial stereotypes, and cultural norms (Posel, 2011). Hair and skin tone thus intersected and became an important identifier of identity and determined social mobility and political power (Posel, 2011). The level of discrimination and oppression people of colour endured came with a hierarchy in which white people were positioned at the top and treated as first-class citizens, while Coloured[1] and black people were treated as second and third-class citizens, respectively (Adhikari, 2005; Holtzman, 2018). The body thus became a place in and through which violence and sociocultural dynamics of racism manifest, as those who had lighter complexions relative to black African people could be classified as Coloured or pass-white and experience relative privilege, in contrast to those with darker complexions who were treated worse, or sub-human (Adhikari, 2004; Erasmus, 2001; Posel, 2011).

Within this engineered racial hierarchy, the reward of social mobility was greater for those classified as Coloured or those who had external markers closer to white people versus black people. This racial hierarchy thus placed whiteness at the top as something to strive toward and that movement upward was more favourable for Coloured people than, for example, black people (Mbatha, 2017; Posel, 2011). Furthermore, having the right kind of hair and being classified as Coloured, especially one with a lighter complexion, was the essence of being within a racialised system. Although the same standards that informed these racial classifications do not exist anymore, the categories still do, albeit for purposes of social redress. These racial categories operate implicitly and still appear to show some form of the apartheid construction in democratic South Africa (Barroso, 2015; Majali et al., 2017; Mbatha, 2017). Against this backdrop, it becomes clear why identity for many individuals and social groups within South Africa remain racialised and is still a contentious issue.

[1] The term Coloured will be capitalised for two reasons in this study. Firstly, I want to make sure that the focus is set on those who identify as such. Secondly, although it is not used as an official racial classification post apartheid, and regarded as a social construct, it is not possible to remove the socio-political nature of the term because elements of the past are still used to label people who are not white. For example, the assumption is still that if you look a certain way, e.g., are fair-skinned or brown, you are probably Coloured.

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The contentious construction of identity possibly applies particularly to Coloured identity, which according to some, is associated with assimilation to white standards, a socio-political history of being in the 'middle of the apartheid racial hierarchy, and a legacy of negative social stereotypes such as 'God's stepchildren or 'bastards' (Adhikari, 2005, 2006; Brown, 2000; Erasmus, 2001; February, 2014). For example, the poet Lynthia Julius (2020) describes her violent symbiotic struggle with colourism and hair in being a Coloured person as follows; "ek was te kroes om' n Kimberley [C]oloured te wees, te glad om opreg Khoi te wees, te gemeng om wit te wees"[2] (p. 82). This struggle with hair and colourism could be interpreted as her describing the essence of its effects on the being, belonging and recognition a Coloured person like her still have had to endure post-apartheid. The continued struggle with embodied markers of identity arises from the ambivalent nature of Coloured identity within a racialised hierarchy that often make representation contested and the experience of oppression relative (Adhikari, 2004, 2005; Dannhauser, 2006).

Therefore, I would argue that some persons who identify as Coloured were and are still more vulnerable and susceptible to assimilate to whiteness. Vulnerability to assimilate for the following reasons: firstly, as stated, in a white supremacist racial hierarchy where whiteness was the measure to strive toward, the reward for upward social mobility has been greater for Coloured people by virtue of having the preferred external markers. Secondly, with Coloured identity being associated with whiteness, for example in terms of culture, and being considered in the middle of the hierarchy post-apartheid (Adhikari, 2005; Brown, 2000; Holtzman, 2018), assimilation into whiteness would be more beneficial for Coloured people versus other racial groups. Such social pressures might continue to impact Coloured social identities post-democracy, particularly at Historically White Institutions (HWIs). HWIs are based on a white ethos and culture, potentially creating a violent and toxic racial environment for other racial identities (Bazana & Mogotsi, 2017; Brunsma et al., 2013; Gusa, 2010; Steyn,

[2] I was too coarse/kinky to be a Kimberley Coloured, too straight to be a full-blown Khoi, too mixed to be white.

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2016). HWIs often create and maintain environments that enforce an assimilationist perspective through the curriculum, the use of language, institutional culture, and other Western concepts to the extent that identities of colour must conform to whiteness at the expense of the self (Bazana & Mogotsi, 2017).

The proposed research seeks to explore whether students identifying as Coloured assimilate or feel pressured to ascribe to whiteness at an HWI, particularly concerning embodied markers of identity such as hair. Research shows that many people of colour (especially women) deliberately reject white standards of beauty and aesthetics by embracing natural hair, thereby reclaiming embodied identity markers (Erasmus, 2000; Kelley, 1997; Ndichu & Upadhyaya, 2019). Hair, like skin tone, is imbued with social meaning (e.g., socioeconomic class, self-esteem, beauty) and has long been used as a symbol of the rejection of white standards (Erasmus, 2000; Kelley, 1997). For example, post-democratic South Africa saw a cultural transition with the rise of the *Kroes* Rocks and Going Natural hair movements, which were regarded as a form of liberation and served as an affirmation of the black/Coloured self, restoring pride in natural beauty, and promoting natural black aesthetics (Chutel, 2018; Thomas, 2019). In the context of such movements, and in considering their relation to social identities, embodied markers of identity and the assimilationist element, that some argue form part of Coloured identity; it is essential to explore whether whiteness is still being perceived (or pursued) as a normative standard more than 25 years after apartheid.

Moreover, it is crucial to establish the pervasiveness of such ideas and the factors contributing to holding such world views in place. The importance of this is two-fold: firstly, to understand a marginalised social identity better, and secondly, to advocate for social justice and transformation in institutional culture. In understanding how Coloured identity makes and remakes itself post-apartheid, it is essential to know whether elements of whiteness are borrowed, embraced, or rejected and how whiteness influences the social identity. Furthermore, it is imperative to hold HWIs accountable for the transformation agenda of

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democratic South Africa and their commitment to creating inclusive environments where all social identities can thrive.

1.2. Rationale and Aims

Weighing in on the debate around the use of race in scientific research, the American Sociological Association stated that racial categories do not automatically reflect genetic or biological categories, and that a "failure to gather data on this socially significant category would preserve the status quo and hamper progress toward understanding and addressing inequalities in primary social institutions" (American Sociological Association, 2003, p. 1). While South Africans continue to be classified in terms of race (as defined by the discriminatory laws under apartheid), they have the option to self-identify in several different ways. This research has, as its focus, the population group still classified as "Coloured" according to the apartheid Population Registration Act of 1950, including those who choose to identify as such. It is of utmost importance to state that the study in no way validates this way of classifying people, nor does it seek to reify this kind of racial ordering (Serote, 2011). The focus on individuals who identify as Coloured is because in South Africa, being categorized as Coloured is not the same as being categorized as black. Although Coloured people were also regarded as being black politically, significant differences exist between these groups in terms of their culture, heritage, physical features as per the racial classification system, and the process of identity formation. Furthermore, existing literature points out that Coloured heritage and culture are often entangled with white heritage and culture, particularly when it comes to language (Afrikaans) and religion (Adhikari, 2005, 2006; Brown, 2000; Erasmus, 2001).

Therefore, considering the commonalities, the position on the racial hierarchy, and the fact that some Coloured people could actually pass as whites due to their physical features, it is important to understand how they define and make sense of whiteness post-apartheid in particular within the setting of an HWI. The research focus is thus specific in relation to

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external markers of identity as these historically allowed Coloured people the means for upward movement on the social hierarchy, affording them first class citizen status relative to discrimination and oppression. The determinants used for classification as a Coloured person included your sphere of work, friends, and family, if you 'passed for white', but most notably if you had certain phenotypes, like texture of their ear lobe, the definition of their cheek bones, fair-skinned, and whether they had the right kind of hair.

HWIs, though more racially diverse than in the past, tend to reproduce whiteness and thus often remain racially toxic to people of colour (Gusa, 2010). If one were to assume that Stellenbosch University has 'a culture,' one could also argue that it remains deeply imbued with white norms and standards. In such contexts, it becomes imperative to comprehend how Coloured people define and understand whiteness, whether they believe it manifests more explicitly at HWIs, how they orient to it, if at all, and whether they believe, for example, that becoming a student (Matie) has got anything to do with whiteness. Previous research on identity construction, colourism, and hair, and how these interact at HWIs have predominantly focused on black African individuals (Barroso, 2015; Gibson, 2012; Moodley, 2013; Pattman, 2007; Phoenix, 2009; Steyn et al., 2014). While both black and Coloured people were oppressed, these two social or racial groups face distinct challenges in the South African context. There thus appears to be a paucity of research on these important issues amongst individuals who identify as Coloured, despite the identity's historical complexities.

As an individual, I do not identify as a Coloured person, but growing up in a community that is classified as such, I am aware of the potentially sensitive nature of the proposed research project. Yet I believe it is crucial to understand how young Coloured people construct their identity at HWI more than 25 years after apartheid. Specifically, it is critical to determine whether pressures or factors exist to ascribe to or uphold white standards and how prevalent such notions are. Of particular interest for the proposed research is understanding whether embodied markers of identity are being used to engage in social

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whitening, given the historical associations between Coloured and white people in South Africa and gaining social capital. It is important to stress that this study in no way seeks to validate racial categories as a means of classifying people, nor does it seek to reify this kind of racial ordering (Serote, 2011). Yet, while racial groups are socially engineered, their past and current implications are not. Race labels are thus employed in full recognition of the socially constructed nature thereof and the heterogeneity and complexity they represent. Taken together, it is key to understand how social identity is constructed in a population that continues to experience marginalization in South Africa, and whether being at an HWIs further marginalizes, liberates, or acknowledges this identity.

The primary aim of the present investigation is to explore whether, and in what ways, young South Africans (i.e., the "born-free" generation) self-identifying as Coloured ascribe (assimilate) to what are considered white norms at an HWI, particularly regarding external appearances, and the pervasiveness of such notions. Of significance will be to explore whether identity formation in the current democratic dispensation is still being informed by what Fanon (1970) considered a desire of black people to be white, particularly because natural hair movements suggest that the formulation of social identities continue against the ultimate standards/ideals of whiteness and could possibly be regarded as a rebellion against whiteness. A secondary aim is to shed light on the potential factors that may influence decisions to ascribe to or reject whiteness.

1.3. Research Questions and Objectives

There were two primary questions that directed the focus of this research project:

- Whether and in what way do South Africans self-identifying as Coloured ascribe (or assimilate) to what is considered white norms at an HWI, particularly with regard to external appearances?
- What are the potential factors that may influence decisions to ascribe to or reject white norms (whiteness)?

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The aims of the proposed study were attained through the following objectives:

i. To gain insight into young people identifying as Coloured's experiences and level of entanglement with white benchmarks at an HWI more than 25 years after apartheid.
ii. To determine in what way external appearance, such as hair styling and skin tone, forms part of their identity construction.
iii. To identify potential factors that may be associated with Coloured individuals' orientation to whiteness (i.e., factors associated with behaviour or attitudes that can either be viewed as neutral, assimilating into white culture, or rejecting whiteness).

1.4. Chapter Outline

This research report has been organised into five chapters. Each of these chapters deal with different aspects of the research study to provide a holistic production of knowledge as it pertains to the external markers of Coloured identity and its construction at an HWI. A summary of each chapter is discussed below:

Chapter 1: This chapter provided the reader with an introduction to the study, contextualising the rationale and purpose thereof and providing an outline for discussion points. This chapter also presents the research questions, aims and objectives.

Chapter 2: This chapter critically engages with existing literature on HWIs, Coloured identity, external markers of identity (e.g., colourism and the politics of hair), and reflects on the influence these can have on the formation of social identities within a social setting. This is followed by a discussion of the theoretical frameworks (Critical Race Theory, Post-Colonial Theory, and Cultural Capital) that compels one to look at the power relations within a society or social setting. Moreover, the dominance of external powers (e.g., whiteness) and structures (e.g., HWI) and the level of social oppression these exert on social identity formation, and how these behave in already stratified societies, will also be discussed.

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Chapter 3: This chapter describes the design of the research study as well as the methodology that I implemented. It describes the theoretical framework of phenomenology as a design inquiry that seeks to describe the meaning and significance of experiences as described by participants. Furthermore, the chapter highlights the processes of collecting and analysing data, followed by a description of the sampling techniques. The chapter concludes with the components of reflexivity, and the ethical considerations adhered to.

Chapter 4: This chapter presents and discusses the findings from the research study in relation to supporting literature. It starts off by introducing the participants and their demographics, perspectives, and personal experiences and journeys around their hair. Through extracted themes and sub-themes, the chapter then discusses participants' experiences regarding external markers of identity, which are supported by evidence in the form of quotations extracted from interview transcriptions.

Chapter 5: This chapter entails of conclusions for the study, engages with limitations and the implications thereof by providing recommendations for future research.

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CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Contextualising the Literature

It is impossible to talk about any process of identity formation within the South African context without reflecting on the construct of race and socio-political context. Identity is defined by Leary and Tangney (2014) as the "traits and characteristics, social relations, roles, and social group memberships that define who one is" (p.69) and how one relates to the other (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). In addition, for Howard (2000) identity positions are socially and historically set in contexts of engagement and contestation. For South Africa, one of the most crucial positions for identity, and more so Coloured identity formation, would have to be apartheid.

With its roots in the nineteenth century, apartheid was a system of racial segregation that discriminated against and oppressed people based on the colour of their skin (Abdi, 1999). The system of apartheid brought about a hierarchy informed by pseudo-biology and a racist ideology that determined social, political, and economic power of the South African population (Adhikari, 2004; Chetty, 2019; Posel, 2011). Identity, in particular the body, thus became very racialised, with race categories or classifications (i.e., white, black, Coloured, etc.) determined by external appearances markers. The engineered racial hierarchy also indicated the level of discrimination and oppression people of colour endured and privileges white people experienced, with white people being treated as first class citizens, while Coloured and black people were treated as second and third-class citizens, respectively (Adhikari, 2005; Holtzman, 2018). Through this, apartheid committed more than physical violence on people of colour in that it used external markers as a form of symbolic violence. Symbolic violence refers to a type of submission or the internalisation of structures of power that legitimise hierarchies that result in self-blame (Bourdieu, 2001). According to Dlamini et al. (2018), individuals consent to their domination by behaving in accordance with classed, racialised, or gendered expectations, or following socio-cultural codes of conduct, such as

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participating in institutional rituals. This violence is not necessarily directed at hurting the physical body, rather, symbolic violence is perpetuated through external markers of identity and is psychological, violating how people think of themselves and disrupting social functioning (Chambers, 2005; Galtung, 1990). In South Africa, the definition of who black and Coloured people could be, the expression of their identity and culture was limited by the acceptance of the normalcy of the racial system of apartheid. The laws of apartheid determined where they could live, what job they could have, who they could marry and what level of education they could obtain. Though apartheid has since come to an end, the remnant of oppressive histories is still present in society and could shape current realities of people of colour in various ways.

Within this contextualised view of identity formation in South Africa, this chapter provides an extensive review of literature dealing with the processes of and influences on identity construction as they pertain to certain social contexts. In line with the purpose of the study, this chapter will start off by reflecting on the ethos of HWIs and how identities of colour have been marginalized by symbolic violence under whiteness. This introduction will be followed by a discussion of the construct and expression of Coloured identity. Lastly, I will discuss the politics of identities by reflecting on hair, colourism, and how these are used to facilitate social mobility. I will conclude the chapter with a discussion on the theoretical frameworks that was used to frame and analyse the research findings.

2.2. Historically White Institutions and Social Identity Formation of the Other

Many institutions around the world have embraced diversity through transformation. For South Africa, the idea of transformation became a reality with democracy post 1994. The term transformation became synonymous with other terms and phrases in the South African context like diversity, racial equality, justice, inclusion and community engagement—words that in essence describe Nelson Mandela's nation-building project, the "Rainbow Nation", a metaphor to recognize diversity within unity (Joubert et al., 2010). In this section I will argue

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that although institutions became diverse in an attempt to transform, those with historical power and status need not be explicitly racist to create what is considered a hostile or toxic environment for identity formation of people of colour (Gusa, 2010). Dissonance

A critique against the education system in South Africa is that it has been utilised to do both good and bad. HWIs used education as a tool to oppress and create division among the apartheid defined races, whereas, reformers used it as a tool to advance cultural transformation and democracy (Reddy, 2004). The implementation of apartheid policies championed inequality, with curricula aimed at non-white citizens accepting this inequality and the superiority of the white race (Biscombe, 2014). The apartheid-law makers created Bantu Education as part of the social engineering process, for non-white citizens and universities of colour or Historically Black Universities (HBUs). Policy designated different universities for the different races; for example, University of the Western Cape for Coloured people, Fort Hare University, exclusively for the Xhosa speaking people, compared to the University of Cape Town for English speaking white people, and Stellenbosch University(SU) for Afrikaans speaking Afrikaners (Reddy, 2004).

HWIs that had once taught and promoted the racial segregation of apartheid became spaces for social transformation, reflecting the transformation agenda, addressing the inherent inequalities, inefficiencies, and socio-economic challenges of the past to redress the historical inequities and to promote equitable distribution of resources and opportunities (Biscombe, 2014; Reddy, 2004). Spaces designed exclusively for white people, became inclusive for other South Africans that were previously disadvantaged by their existence. However, the culture and educational ethos that created these institutions often persist. HWIs, such as universities, can thus be defined as institutions that have "histories, traditions, symbols, stories, icons, curriculum, and processes [that] were all designed by whites, for whites, to reproduce whiteness via a white experience at the exclusion of others, [before democracy], …[from] such spaces" (Brunsma et al., 2013, p. 719). Reddy (2004) argues that because these

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institutions are historically white, undemocratic values still persist in them, values according to Steyn et al. (2014) that are rooted in racial domination and the culture of whiteness

Whiteness operates differently in many places, spaces, and contexts which include but also transcends white people. Based on a review of literature from various disciplines, Schooley et al. (2019) defines the racial discourse of whiteness as a, "multidimensional construct that envelops racial attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, and experiences most prevalently, but not exclusively, related to white people and the privileged position white people embody in a racially hierarchical society" (p.532). Varying across time and space, whiteness is thus the accumulation of unspoken racial practices (e.g., customs, traditions), cultural values, and attitudes that indicate what is considered normative of the standard, which in turn privileges a white skin and makes systems of white supremacy natural (Helms, 2017; Nayak, 2007; Schooley et al., 2019; Wallace, 2018). It is often the unmarked normalcy of whiteness that allows forms of domination in the form of institutionalised racism in educational practices, political power, social orders, and hierarchies of differences in everyday life to endure (Wallace, 2018).

In societies, spaces, and contexts, whiteness is the constant reinforcement of socially constructed white identifications and interests (Gillborn, 2005). These reinforcements can be anything from using the "right kind of Afrikaans" or having a *sokkie* (a dance in Afrikaner culture) as a social event at an HWI. All of these might seem innocent on the surface, or even normal within the context, when in fact it can perpetuate whiteness, privileging white interests, and forcing "the other" to be accepting of it and even assimilate towards it. Therefore various kinds of activities, be it in the residences or as part of the academic curriculum, may propagate whiteness in HWIs, thereby alienating people of colour and making them outsiders culturally (Bazana & Mogotsi, 2017; Mnguni, 2016). Though Leonardo (2002) highlights a number of defining characteristics of whiteness, Gillborn (2005) notes the importance of not regarding whiteness as stable, nor unambiguous. In addition, Wa

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Azania (2020) takes the argument of how whiteness operates in HWIs even further, claiming that as it is difficult to see whiteness or to explain the manifestations of the culture and values, therefore, this is can be even more difficult for students of colour.

Furthermore, the dominant white cultural ideology that is entrenched in cultural practices, language, and perceptions of knowledge allow HWIs to continue to be racialized, while boasting of a racially diverse populations (Brunsma et al., 2013; Gusa, 2010; Moodley, 2013; Reddy, 2004; Steyn, 2016). When cultural spaces are permeated with power and ideology, it sets the stage for unexamined racialized environments that become alienating spaces of hegemonic power and reservoirs for whiteness (Bazana & Mogotsi, 2017; Brunsma et al., 2013; Moodley, 2013; Steyn, 2016). Reddy (2004) recalls the injustices of how apartheid policy used education as a tool to oppress and socialize non-white citizens into accepting racist education, inequality, white superiority, and overall status quo through Afrikaans as an instruction language, lack of resources, and Bantu education. Jansen (2004) and Biscombe (2014) argue that divisions, social discrimination, and cultural divides still persist within HWIs. These notions that the teachers, professors, and administrators see no colour when looking at their students are perpetuated by a "colour blind" approach to education; thus, they do not recognize the asymmetric power dynamics that only further perpetuate and maintain the status quo of white superiority.

Jansen (2004) further argues that the problem lies in the "lack of consciousness, very often, of the ways in which [educational institutions] are organized and teaching conveyed that in fact hold direct consequences for learners, identity and transformation" (pp. 117-128). Ideologies, pedagogies, and cultural activities present the student of colour as inferior within the scope of whiteness, which could force them to become whiter in order to become familiar with or accepted in the setting. Thus, for people of colour, their humanity could only be affirmed in the HWIs through a process like assimilation. As a result of this orientation to whiteness, a need arises to scrutinize HWIs, as these institutions are paramount in the process

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of identity formation and transformation. A failure to interrogate structures of power within HWIs will perpetuate systems of whiteness and injustice at the expense of students of colour, alienating them at the expense of dominant culture/social identity.

Pilane (2014) found that an assimilationist perspective is enforced through education in HWIs. In addition Bazana and Mogotsi (2017) argues that students of colour conform to the existing white culture through education, the use of language, institutional culture, and other Western concepts. For example, assimilation could be facilitated through using Afrikaans as the language of instruction, the names of buildings and rituals like *Vensters* [3](social function), *Skakels* [4] and *Sêr*[5], which endorse the Afrikaner culture. As a result of interaction with whiteness, students of colour are required to change or adapt their psychological and cultural behaviour to acculturate to the cultural norms in the context (Berry, 2005). This act of purposefully altering behaviour in settings to accommodate the cultural norms considered foreign to an individual, and for that behaviour to be considered appropriate, is called "cross-cultural code-switching" (Molinsky, 2007). Fanon describes a similar process as "mimicry," when the lifestyle or actions of whiteness are mimicked or copied by the person of colour, born out of an inferiority complex and the desire to be white (Barroso, 2015; Fanon, 1970). Cross-cultural code-switching and mimicry as a result of interaction with whiteness often force students of colour to part with some core aspects of themselves in order to be accepted or appear appropriate at HWIs. Moodley (2013) and Wa Azania (2020) highlight the ambivalence that black students experience regarding their self-worth due to internalization of white values. This internalisation devalues students' sense of self and lessens their identification with their own social group. This constant pressure to adapt or assimilate creates what Du Bois (1903) referred to as a double consciousness. In this context, double consciousness can be defined as the constant internal conflict people of colour

[3] Vensters is a social function or a dance event all first years typically attend at the start of the academic year.
[4] Skakels is a social event between members of different residences.
[5] Sêr is a campus acapella competition.

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experience because of multiple social identities, making it challenging to develop a sense of self.

In Moodley's (2013) study, “Transformation and black students in higher education,” students of colour reported that they had to “change themselves in some way” when in a racialised environment and interacting with white people (p. 20). The changes that people of colour must make signifies a possible sense of inferiority. Likewise in her study, “Understanding of black student identities,” Barroso (2015) reported multiple levels of inferiority in black participants at Rhodes University, in that whiteness creates not only social and intellectual inferiority but also a physical inferiority. Black participants reported their physical appearance inferior and that it was their blackness that made them less attractive when compared to whiteness.

Barroso (2015) interprets the fixation that black participants had with the appearance and behaviour of white culture as an experience that transcends merely trying to imitate whiteness by adopting white lifestyle, but rather as an effort of students of colour to embody whiteness literally. Referring to white physical traits of skin tone and hair, a participant of the study said the following: “You know that classic model of what it means to be white, the long hair, the [C]oloured hair, dye your hair in certain ways. I don’t know if that is a signifier of saying that your culture is inferior” (Barroso, 2015, p. 88). In this instance, this participant regarded hair as a tactic to negotiate whiteness, with the person choosing (representing the inferiority complex) to look white in a culture that values whiteness (Barroso, 2015). This tension between aspiring to become white at HWIs and having to fit into one’s own culture and society at home could potentially cause an internal split within the person of colour.

The past interpretations of Coloured identity through the lens of apartheid are still relevant in democratic South Africa. Although HWIs are more diverse, they have remained very much white in culture, colour, and ethos, meaning they are merely contemporary white spaces (Bazana & Mogotsi, 2017; Pilane, 2014). Reflecting on his experience as a student

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living in residence at Stellenbosch University, Odendaal (2012 as cited in Biscombe, 2014) highlights that dominant Afrikaner and Afrikaans culture persists within HWIs in South Africa, spaces of learning around campus, as well as residences. For Odendaal (2012), institutions like Stellenbosch University have a legacy of endorsing and sustaining white supremacy. As well as maintaining the institutional identity, that contains the ethos, culture, and the system of the university, which continue to cause tension within the spaces of learning. This means that people of colour within HWIs are still experiencing the ingrained white culture and superiority in post-apartheid South Africa.

The most noticeable student movements against whiteness and its toxicity at HWIs came through the #RhodesMustFall, #FeesMustFall, and Open Stellenbosch movements in 2013, 2015 and 2018 respectively. These movements were protest actions against the institutional glorification and perpetuation of white supremacy through symbols that embody colonialism and apartheid at HWIs (Bazana & Mogotsi, 2017; Heleta, 2016; Open Stellenbosch Collective [OSC], 2015; Wingfield, 2017). These movements called on the decolonialisation of curriculums in higher education and the need to speed up transformation in HWIs. The movements wanted decolonisation or, “the independence of a nation in producing and acquiring knowledge, values and skills” (Wingfield, 2017, p. 1). The students who were apart of the decolonialisation protests asked for the introduction of African epistemology in the teaching methods, as the Eurocentric / Western epistemology were regarded as dehumanizing to black students (Heleta, 2016; Mbembe, 2016). Apart from the apartheid curricula (Mbembe, 2016), the privilege of white Afrikaans culture (OSC, 2015) is also represented in the staff demographics at HWIs, which perpetuates inequality by portraying people of colour inferior to their white counterparts. However, the struggles advocated by the protest movements, were not just about the representation of people of colour but about a sense of belonging, space, and the need for social justice. Through their call for social justice, these protest movements highlighted the need to validate and recognise

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the humanity of students of colour often denied by institutional culture rooted in the celebration and maintenance of whiteness at HWIs. The need for affirmation of students of colour may come as a result of how whiteness alienates and dehumanizes them by not recognising their culture, language, epistemologies, and presenting Eurocentric / Western ways as the standard way of thinking (Bazana & Mogotsi, 2017; Wa Azania, 2020). The emergence and presence of protest movements as mentioned, accentuate the importance of identity formation for all, especially for people of colour within the confinements of alienating spaces of hegemonic power and reservoirs for whiteness.

Doing an extensive review of literature dealing with identity construction at HWIs, Bazana and Mogotsi (2017) foreground that a significant gap exists in the present literature on how black African and Coloured students construe identity at HWIs in South Africa. In particular, the literature that does exist tend to focus on black Africans, rather than on Coloured individuals, with black being defined broadly, more than just skin colour (Barroso, 2015; Gibson, 2012; Moodley, 2013; Pattman, 2007; Phoenix, 2009; Steyn et al., 2014). While these two social or racial groups are both oppressed, they face distinct challenges in the South African context. Studies done by Gibson (2012) and Moodley (2013) have also focused on English as a language of instruction and a conduit for assimilation, and not on Afrikaans. The focus is of significance, as the distinctive Afrikaans[6] historically used by Coloured people has been used to denigrate them to a lower social status. However, when they knew how to speak “respectable or pure Afrikaans” they were able to associate with whiteness more easily, which benefit to their social standing while a detriment to their cultural identity (Adhikari, 2006). In addition, a great number of the literature that focus on identity formation like those discussed above, does not specifically focus on hair and skin tone as embodied markers of identity. Neither does the literature focus on embodied markers of identity as a means to

[6] The Afrikaans vernacular distinctive of the Coloured community and variously referred to as *Kaaps*, Cape, Capey, Gamtaal (language of Ham) or *Kombuis* (kitchen) Afrikaans has, for example, customarily been stigmatised as a mark of social inferiority.

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facilitate identity formation or reflect on the extent to which whiteness informs external markers. The literature also fails to address how exactly Coloured identity operates as a social identity within spaces like HWIs.

2.3. Coloured Identity: The Creation and Expression of Colouredness Pre and Post Democracy

Though some would believe that Coloured identity has remained stable as a social identity over time, Adhikari (2004) argues that the expressions and the ways Colouredness operates has been in flux and undergone rapid transformation, particularly in the post-apartheid environment. The term, classification, or (racial/social) identification noted as 'Coloured' has always been a contentious one. "Coloured" was legally signed into law in 1950 with the introduction of the South African Population Registration Act. With this act, the apartheid government imposed labels of racial identity on citizens (Holtzman, 2018; Posel, 2011; Richards, 2017). Posel (2001) notes that under the Population Registration Act of 1950, there were no single statutory definition of racial categories, which were often invoked by different laws and variables. The markers for being classified as a Coloured were: one's sphere of work, customary traditions, if they were the offspring of parents who "passed for white," if they applied for promotion as a well-educated "Native" (black), and, most notably, if they were fair-skinned and had the right kind of hair.

In addition, according to the act, "Coloured" was a term used to describe people of mixed ancestry, opposed to "pure" white and black, and indicated a middle position in the South African racial hierarchy which was distinct from both the numerical black majority and white minority population groups. This racial category included diverse groups like the Basters, Malays, Namas, Khoe, San and Griquas (Adhikari, 2006; Brown, 2000; Richards, 2017). Today, others define the term as a people, diverse in their oneness, who are bound together by historical forces and events in time, such as slavery and a number of relative oppressive treatment, rather than by a common ethnic identity (Adhikari, 2005; Brown, 2000;

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Erasmus, 2001; Richards, 2017). Though the construction and use of the term “Coloured” is rooted in a white supremacist notion of being, some would argue that the conception of the label/term transcends that of political racial categorisation (as discussed below under social constructionism) into a legitimate social identity (Adhikari, 2006; Erasmus, 2001).

Authors like Adhikari (2005, 2006), Erasmus (2001), and Holtzman (2018) suggest that several factors have historically contributed to what is regarded as a potentially confused, fragmented, uncertain, and often misunderstood Coloured identity today. In his book *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough,* which includes different historical texts and authors, Adhikari (2006) presents three main paradigms through which Coloured identity are expressed, perceived, and what informs its construction: (1) essentialist, (2) instrumentalist, and (3) social constructionist paradigms. Regarded as a product of miscegenation, dating back to the early days of European settlement, is the essentialist approach. A predominantly racialised approach, the essentialist paradigm assigned natural born racialized origins and characteristics to Colouredness, which then embodied general perceptions that moulded Coloured identity. The identity was thus regarded as a natural and self-evident product of racial miscegenation, with racial hybridity considered the nature of Coloured identification.

The second school of thought, which grew out of a rejectionist movement during the 1960s -70s, instrumentalists defined Coloured identity essentially as artificial, a label imposed on certain groups by the apartheid government to divide and rule the non-white majority. Within this paradigm Coloured identity was regarded as a product of social engineering, informed by pseudo-biology, basing the racial category on looks and aesthetic features like skin colour and hair. Both Erasmus (2001) and Adhikari (2004, 2005) argue that this notion reified and solidified the construction of the identity in the popular mind. The first two paradigms are regarded as condescending because they fail to acknowledge the agency Coloured people had in constructing their own identity. Essentialists assume that Colouredness is an inherited quality, or third race, that stem inevitably from interbreeding of

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different races, while instrumentalists share the premise that Coloured identity is imposed, negative and undesirable due to the racism of the white ruling class. In a dominant, white-supremacist society it was regarded as God-given or natural, which fits into the social order/hierarchy(Adhikari, 2004).

The social constructionist approach, which is the third approach, originates from criticisms of both the essentialist and instrumentalist paradigms due to their tendency to regard Coloured identity as imposed, oversimplified, given or fixed (Adhikari, 2006; Erasmus, 2001). Social constructionism argues that Coloured self-identification is fluid and ambiguous in its expression, something that the previous two paradigms fail to grasp. One of the most noticeable contributions to the social constructionist approach post-apartheid came from Erasmus (2001) who argues that Coloured identity is not a product of racial mixture but of cultural creativity– new identities are formed by borrowing through creolization (Erasmus, 2001). Though used by Erasmus to conceptualise Coloured identity, Creolisation Theory was originally used by Édouard Glissant (Bongie, 1997) to make sense of Caribbean creole people, whose ancestry can be traced to displaced Africans slaves. Glissant used the theory to describe the development of identity and cultures that merged from the mixing of Europeans and Africans. A process of hybridization, the mutual and symbolic exchange of cultural traits, would produce varying creole forms with the adoption of languages and cultural practices but also the acquisition of new cultural patterns. Erasmus (2001) builds on this the theory to describe the process of Coloured identity construction by extending creolisation theory to say that the process of creolisation is creative burrowing and not just a product of racial mixture.

Erasmus (2001) describes the process of creolization as the “cultural creativity under very specific conditions [like slavery, colonialism and apartheid] of marginality and…the construction of the identity out of elements of ruling as well as subaltern cultures” (p. 16). Therefore, through this process of creolisation, Coloured identity is allowed to be ambiguous, impartial, diverse, and discontinuous, more than cross breeding or hybrid but legitimate as a

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result of synthesis (Khan, 2018). In this conceptualisation or description, Coloured identity is made and remade by the people themselves and the meaning ascribed to it comes from those who embody the identity. Thus, those who associate or identify with the social identity are active in the formation of their identity, selecting traits from others based on preference and their social conditions. In other words, the Colouredness of a person from the Eastern Cape might be influenced by Xhosa culture in terms of what they eat and drink, enjoying porridge, and *umqombothi* [7]. While someone else's Colouredness from Cape Town might be influenced by Malay culture, enjoying a *gatsby* [8]and *koesisters*[9], however both remain legitimate Coloureds in their own right.

One has to agree with Adhikari (2006) in that though the assumption that the identity is made and remade by the people themselves is broadly true, one should be aware of the conscious manipulation of perceptions and emotions under both white supremacy and the post-apartheid environment. This is largely because the condition for creolization is marginalisation, and for Coloured people these conditions were caused or influenced by the ruling class-white people under apartheid and black people in current political power, although their influence is not as extensive as during apartheid. An oversimplified view/understanding of Coloured identity is created by eurocentrism (essentialists) and Coloured protest politics due to social injustices (instrumentalists) in a way that overstates, "the resistance of Coloured people to white supremacism… playing down their accommodation within the South African racial system" (Adhikari, 2006, p. 35). Social constructionism, therefore, seeks to highlight the agency in the creation and complexities of the Coloured social identity, but more so how the ambiguities together with marginality have impacted political consciousness and social experiences. The literature and the ideology are wrestling with the question: what did Coloured people accept and what did they reject in the creation of their identity, and what parts of that were their choice or the consequences of a

[7] Traditional beer made from maize, malt, yeast, and water.
[8] A gatsby is a footlong bread roll stuffed with hot chips, choice of filling, and sauces.
[9] Traditional Cape Malay fried dough flavoured with cinnamon, cardamom, aniseed, and other mixed spices.

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culture that pursues whiteness as the standard? Thus, if the identity is made and remade, how do those classified as Coloured express their identity in a society that still is hierarchical and values and pursues whiteness as a standard of being?

The available literature identifies four salient features that have shaped the formation of Coloured identity and the expression of Colouredness within white dominated/apartheid South Africa. These include: (i) assimilation, (ii) intermediate social status, (iii) negative associations, and (iv) marginality (Adhikari, 2005, 2006; Erasmus, 2001; Fanon, 1970; Sizwe, 1979). The assimilation that Adhikari (2005) refers to is the need for acknowledgment of worth, to not just be regarded as a colour, but rather to be included into and gain acceptance from the dominant (white) culture or cultural elite. In addition, occupying an intermediate minority status within the socio-political racial hierarchy also contributes to Coloured identity. Erasmus (2001) and Sizwe (1979) regard this position as being better than black (native) but less than white. It is a position that is fuelled by relative privilege and dissociation from things all African and a little political power (Adhikari, 2005; Erasmus, 2001).

However, this in-between status also came with certain negative stereotypes and derogatory connotations in reference to other groups. Coloured people were often called "God's stepchildren" or "bastards"—the product of inter-racial marriage —and hence associated with illegitimacy, untrustworthiness, sexual promiscuity, and immorality (Adhikari, 2006; Erasmus, 2001; Richards, 2017). Some authors (e.g. Adhikari, 2006; Erasmus, 2001; Holtzman, 2018) argue that these derogations and negative stereotypes have become part of Coloured identity so much that it is accepted within the culture as the fate of a bad lottery draw. In this conception of the identity, Colouredness is constructed as a racialised identity. Therefore, associating with, and assimilating into, whiteness indicates increased distance from black which allows Coloureds to hold onto whatever socio-political power the intermediate social status affords (Adhikari, 2005; Sizwe, 1979).

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In addition, the element of marginality is another factor that has and could still directly impacts the functionality of Coloured identity. How Colouredness manifests is directly associated with how those classified as such have been marginalized socially, politically, and culturally (Adhikari, 2006; Brown, 2000; Kgosana, 2018). This position is the main characteristic that has and continues to place severe limitations on both the social and political action or function of Coloured identity. The identity is found wanting as a minority group in a nation state or national consciousness that favours the black/white dominant groups while Coloured people are left with a desire for recognition, appreciation, belonging, empowerment, and development (Holtzman, 2018). This marginal status, often regarded as a burden, has remained with Coloured people in democratic South Africa (Adhikari, 2004; Brown, 2000; Holtzman, 2018).

The post-democratic environment brought with it an end to white domination, and the freedom of identification and association but new socio-political dynamics. However, even though Coloured identity has greater salience, the Coloured people's political power and social standing was left as the intermediate as the white and black culture wrestled for power and influence. The more things change, with democracy and political power sharing, the more they stay the same especially regarding the socio-political position of Coloured people. Under the new dispensation, there seems to be a belief in the Coloured working-class community that they did not gain from the new order (Adhikari, 2004; Holtzman, 2018). These beliefs were fuelled by unfounded claims of punishment from the new order under the ANC government through inequitable policies. Most believed it was a result of their relative oppression as opposed to absolute oppression of black people under apartheid (Adhikari, 2004; Holtzman, 2018). According to Adhikari (2004) there are perceptions amongst some Coloured people that they are, "worse off under the new dispensation than they were under apartheid… [thus they] were better off under the white man" (p. 171) and that their plight

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(e.g., poor service delivery, lack of social development opportunities and overall well-being) is not recognised by the government (Holtzman, 2018).

The new dispensation of democracy created opportunities for new ways of conceptualisation of Colouredness and discourses around the nature and role of the social identity within South African society. The transition to democracy brought about the ability to re-imagine, re-assess, and re-align, allegiances and priorities which created conducive circumstances for the remoulding of social identities, including freedom of association and the expression of Coloured identity (Adhikari, 2004). However, Erasmus (2001) argues that discourses of rainbowism, or rainbow nationalism, are discourses of national identity encapsulated by the metaphor of unity in diversity. This discussion of unity, combined with Africanism, makes it challenging for Coloured identity to reconceptualize, as these ideas perpetuate marginalisation. Rainbowism disregards the salience of race and ethnicity in the make-up of the democratic environment and fails to recognise the asymmetric power dynamics in expression of identities. In addition, Africanism denies the hybridity of Colouredness, which results in the exclusion of Colouredness from those defined as black and African (Erasmus, 2001).

"Coloured ethnicity" was recognised by the ANC, who had essentialist concepts of race, but the effects of this ethnic view on the "Coloured group's consciousness" resulted in a reification of the identity and reinforcing exclusivity (Adhikari, 2004; Brown, 2000). In many ways, this undermined the rejectionist movements from the 1970s and 1980s. A racialised notion of Colouredness continued among a majority of those who identify with the identity/classification, especially the working-classes. This conception or cultural expression, under democracy, still had strong affinities to whiteness with racist hostility toward black people, which was influenced by apartheid values (Adhikari, 2004; Holtzman, 2018). Coloured people have a sensitivity towards race, which Adhikari believes emulates from their

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marginality and intermediate status on the social hierarchy that creates feelings of vulnerability and weakness.

In addition to these factors that have influenced the construction of what is known as Coloured identity, not everyone willingly recognises or chooses this way of identification or classification (Adhikari, 2004; Kgosana, 2018; Mellet, 2018). While some embraced a collective social identity, some have rejected it, while others tried to re-invent Khoisan ethnic identity (e.g. the Khoisan Conscious Movement (Adhikari, 2004; Holtzman, 2018). During apartheid, and still today, some may prefer to be referred to as "so-called Coloureds" and now KhoiSan or the First Nation (February, 2014; Holtzman, 2018). It is well noted that intellectuals and a number of former anti-apartheid activists continue to reject Colouredness as a manner of "false consciousness or white imposed identification"(Adhikari, 2004, p. 175; Sizwe, 1979). Adhikari makes the argument that one of the main reasons behind the new forms of expression is that Coloured people want to discredit racist ideologies and the racial apartheid notions that conceived, constructed, and imposed their identity. Under the new supposed non-racist egalitarian society, Coloured people have developed strategies to foster group interest, in particular a desire to move away from the notion of relative privilege during apartheid (Adhikari, 2004; Holtzman, 2018).

Even though some have embraced and celebrated Coloured identity, it is important to emphasize that Coloured identity is complex and that racialized conclusions, based on the tone of someone's skin, should be avoided. Bulhan (1985) states using Fanon's Manichaean psychology, or binary definitions of being, that society will be vulnerable to assimilation or alteration when binary thinking is the norm. Because of this, it does not matter whether one argues that Coloured identity is essentialist, instrumentalist, or a social construction, current expressions will always be susceptible to the assimilation to whiteness, especially where white hegemony makes the rules of culture. This dualistic or binary view is captured in the sentiment of many who feel that during apartheid, they were not white enough and now in

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democracy, they are not black enough. In a society like South Africa, a social identity like Coloured could always be found wanting simply because the narrative of the identity remains imposed on the assumption of a social status based on connection to whiteness or distance from blackness due to their level of assimilation and relative oppression under apartheid. This could be true in a society that has very racialised and reductionist notions of being, Colouredness could always remain negative, discarded, and lacking (Erasmus, 2001). Colouredness will not meet the standard of blackness nor whiteness because of how racially polarised society is. Having a hierarchical society, with racialised and reductionist views of identity, where Coloured people are in the middle due to inherent characteristics, it leaves the question: where are embodied markers of identity placed within this polarised notion of being?

2.4. Embodied Identity Markers

Everyone uses different markers and symbols that serve as an embodiment of who they are, whether it be ethnic, social, political, or individual. For some, their identity is often linked to their physical body through markers (Gonzales, 2019). For others it is a shared experience, like oppression under apartheid. Today most researchers agree that racial categorization is socially constructed, and hence to some extent, fluid or malleable, without any biological meaning (Richeson & Sommers, 2016). Yet, biological markers of race, especially in terms of physical appearances, such as skin tone or hair texture, continue to be used to ascribe a racial identity to a person, often deciding the person's social fate. Certain individuals would for example regard themselves as black or Coloured because of the colour of their skin or based on similar life stories. The manifestation of their blackness or Colouredness is therefore embodied in how they physically appear or what they have experienced.

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2.4.1 Colourism and Perceptions of Self

Research on skin tone identifies a positive correlation and persistent relationship between having a lighter skin colour and higher socioeconomic status and better education (Bowman et al., 2004; Hunter, 2002). In addition, exploring early associations with the symbolism of colour, Naidoo et al. (2016), found that complexion has assumed political, economic, and psychological currency, often prompting the desire for skin lighteners across the boundaries of race, country, cultural, and socioeconomic status. For example, according to Bowman et al. (2004), during the colonial era, the division of slaves and their value was sometimes determined by their skin tone. Social stratification based on skin tone certainly influenced the development of black social structure, which led to lightness in terms of skin colour becoming a commodity that enabled higher social and occupational class (Gonzales, 2019; Kronus, 1971). Studies have found a relationship between skin tone and body satisfaction, especially for women, with research pointing to a positive correlation in the level of dissatisfaction with appearance and a person with a darker skin tone (Falconer & Neville, 2000).

In addition, studies done in America and Colombia found that Western perceptions of aesthetics significantly impact self-esteem and identity development among black people (Thompson & Keith, 2001; Viveros Vigoya, 2015). These studies found that evaluations of the self were more negative with individuals, and particularly women, that have a darker complexion and are from a lower socioeconomic class. The skin tone hierarchy thus creates a systematic privilege that benefits light skin at the top and dark skin at the bottom, which evidently impacts the identity, and cultural and personal expressions in a social group and greater society.

Colourism is a term first used by Alice Walker in 1982 to refer to the “prejudicial or preferential treatment of same-race people based solely on their colour” (Norwood, 2015, p. 586). In the USA, for example, light-skinned African Americans, Latinos, and Asian

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Americans live in better neighbourhoods, marry higher-status individuals, earn more money, and enjoy better schooling than their darker-skinned counterparts (Telles et al., 2015; Viveros Vigoya, 2015). It is imperative to note that colourism does not necessarily imply racism; however, there is a link between the two. Racism would refer to a person not being hired because they are black, whereas colourism would mean hiring a black person that is lighter in complexion because of the inference that the person is closer to whiteness. Furthermore, as is the case with hair, colourism is gendered because notions of who and what is beautiful affect women more than men (Norwood, 2015; Viveros Vigoya, 2015).

Though there is a scarcity of literature on colourism within the African and South African context, the narrative thereof in South Africa appears to be similar for people of colour, especially during the years of apartheid. Mbatha (2017) argues that even though there is a scarcity of literature, and most literature that does exist on colourism is based on research from America, one can draw from the sociohistorical construction of race classification under apartheid. Apartheid, an era in which the construction of race was used to justify the legal discrimination against non-white citizens, saw the policing of identities along colour and hair lines. Though the process of social engineering was guided by the Population Registration Act of 1950, there were no single required statutory definition of racial classifications. Thus, even though the main features were pseudo-biology, the laws that invoked the classifications were often inconsistent (Posel, 2011; Ratele & Duncan, 2003). However, classifications were radicalised, guided by white superiority, and charged by white supremacy, with race measured by genealogies of descent and observable features of appearance. Thus, apart from social signifiers and habits, a person who looked white and was generally accepted as such was classified as white, and if you looked black or accepted as a member of a tribe you were classified black. Inevitably white people determined who was classified how, and thus regarded intelligent enough to enjoy the privileges of the conventional hierarchies. This racial

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hierarchy placed whiteness, the hallmark of racial purity, at the apex, something to strive toward as the standard to be considered fully human (Mbatha, 2017; Posel, 2011).

Intersecting with hair, the colour of skin became an important signifier of identity that also determined social mobility and political power (Posel, 2011). Matters of budget allocation, housing, health benefits, employment, taxation, education, and overall access, were determined by the colour of a person's skin. If a person was classified as Coloured, the possibility of moving up the social ladder also came with the complexion of a lighter skin. Apart from the other identifiers, for example speech, area of birth, or surname, if individuals had lighter complexions relative to black African people, they could be classified as Coloured or pass-white and experience relatively less oppression under the apartheid system (Adhikari, 2004; Erasmus, 2001; Posel, 2011). Having the right complexion and being classified as Coloured, especially one with a lighter complexion, was the epitome of colourism within a racialised understanding of identity.

Describing himself as a dark skinned Coloured, Robert McBride, former member of the Azanian students' Organisation (AZASO), ANC, MK (uMkhonto weSizwe), and a death row political prisoner, reflects on the role colourism played in his family because he had a set of white Afrikaner maternal grandparents and Zulu and Coloured paternal grandparents (Mokae, 2004). For Robert, life was tougher since he was expected to work harder than his light-skinned siblings because his family was so colour conscious. Unlike Robert, his siblings were so light-skinned that they were later able to pass as white (Brown, 2000; Erasmus, 2001; Mokae, 2004). South African comedian Trevor Noah highlighted how the people of his predominantly black township, Soweto, would comment and mock his fair complexion. These stories become punch lines in his jokes. He would go on to explain that it was difficult for his grandmother to discipline him, because she did not know how to "beat a white child," one of the numerous benefits of being born light skinned in a community and household of colour (Noah, 2016). These stories appear to be outliers; however, they are actual individual stories

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that represent the larger culture of navigating a world defined by skin colour with the possibility of winning a genetic lottery that will bestow greater privilege, power, and social status to those who have lighter skin complexion. Historically, black and Coloured people desired to lighten their skin to access the privilege of whiteness. (Bizela, 2016).

In recent years, the related term “yellow bone” has become popular among black African people in South Africa. A yellow bone is someone of African descent who has desirable Caucasian features, such as a pointed nose, coloured eyes (not brown), smooth or straight hair, but particularly a fair or light skin complexion (Mokoena, 2017). Studies by Chirove (2019) and Mbatha (2017) found that participants who were born with yellow bones enjoyed privileges based on their light-skinned complexion. The findings of these studies showed that value assigned to people was based on skin complexion, and women of colour were only considered beautiful when they had a lighter skin tone. Chirove's (2019) study identified positive self-esteem on both the individual and social level when women had lighter skin, in addition to having more friends, finding mating partners, and accessing more opportunities like jobs and favours. In contrast, Mbatha (2017) found that these social agents are complicit in perpetuating the negative treatment among social groups based on complexion thus concurring the findings of Phoenix (2014). In comparison, Chirove (2019) found that being light skinned also left participants being underestimated, their achievements were undermined, they were considered to have no morals, were subjected to name calling, and were sexually harassed. In addition, Mbatha (2017) found that the discrimination toward and between people of colour as a collective is transferred intergenerationally. Intergenerational trauma affects identity formation as it perpetuates the pervasive nature of colourism through symbolic violence that is inherited and internalised from a violent past guided by racist ideology. Both Chirove (2019) and Bizela (2016) highlight the notion local South African celebrities believe that there are advantages assigned to and benefits to be enjoyed when they have lighter complexions.

Though being born a natural yellow bone is not an option for most people of colour, especially those born with a darker complexion, the practice of skin bleaching/whitening has

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become very common to obtain yellow bone status. With the advancements in the field of dermatology and beauty care, it has become possible for black people to alter their skin tone artificially. Skin bleaching or whitening "involves the application of various cosmetic products (e. g. creams, soap, and lotions) that contain potentially dangerous chemical agents" (Kpanake et al., 2009, p. 350). Skin-lightening practices like bleaching are not the same across social class and is intersected by race, class, and gender as it is often women who engage in them. Up to 70% of women in parts of Africa, and 35% in Pretoria, South Africa, use skin lightening creams and other forms of altering skin colour, like makeup (Davids, 2015). The popularity of this term is another indication of the desire of predominantly black African women to assimilate to white beauty standards and embrace the discrimination against people with darker complexion that is often exploited by a capitalist system that sells whiteness or fair complexion as norm (Bizela, 2016). These means of lightening the skin have been linked to what some call racial capital (Davids, 2015). It is the intersection of a capitalist gender system and the culture of consumption that constructs whiteness as a product to be sold to people of colour (Bizela, 2016). More so, for dark skinned people bleaching and skin lightening become means to contest systems like patriarchy, colonialism, and apartheid that has historically placed them at a bottom.

Bizela (2016) argues that the term yellow bone or naturally light-skinned is evident of the obsessive consciousness regarding skin tone in communities of colour. Kanyi Mbau, a South African celebrity, reflecting on the need to have a lighter complexion stated: "I look better when I am lighter, I believe the brighter you are in appearance, the more you will stand out… I need to stand out" (Chirove, 2019, p. 10). Likewise, Nomasonto "Mshoza" Maswanganyi-Mnisi, a Kwaito singer, stated that her new (lighter) skin makes her feel more endowed and confident. I would thus argue that Mbau and Mshoza technically became yellow bones through skin lightening/bleaching their skins. The body thus becomes a way to articulate what is acceptable in a society that communicates through Eurocentric and Western

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world view/standards (Bizela, 2016; Mbatha, 2017; Naidoo et al., 2016). People of colour may thus appropriate whiteness through whitening their skin, to negotiate the social hierarchy that appears to create self-hate.

Appropriating whiteness through skin lightening/bleaching, is not just an attempt to escape otherness, be it blackness or Colouredness, but also a problematic way to attain personhood (Bizela, 2016). People of colour see the pathological desire or pursuit of whiteness as a form of escapism for those who are dark skinned, because a darker complexion is symbolic of inferiority, ugliness, worthlessness, and being subhuman (feelings of nonexistence) (Bizela, 2016; Fanon, 1970). In contrast, being defined as a yellow bone or engaging in skin bleaching becomes synonymous with beauty and attractiveness, and the manifestation of the conscious, a way to re-write, redefine, reconstruct blackness or Colouredness (Barroso, 2015; Fanon, 1970). For Bizela (2016), though bleaching could be a way to negotiate blackness, it cannot transcend blackness as a racial construct, but it can challenge the fixated perspective of blackness that people have.

In conclusion, having a lighter skin complexion and being regarded as a yellow bone are often efforts to attain self-esteem, achieve beauty norms, and social mobility (Van Hout & Wazaify, 2021). Blackness, with the inclusion of Colouredness, could become a sign of social class because of the prevalence of continued structural inequalities and historical notions of identity in South Africa. People of colour could thus pursue whiteness to escape blackness or Colouredness in a society that favours those who assimilate, even at the expense of the self. However, for Gonzales (2019), the systematic privilege of skin tone is not just limited to that, but includes other physical characteristics like hair texture, which also plays a role in the social landscape and functions as a gatekeeper, denying or granting access to privilege.

2.4.2. The Politics of Hair

Throughout history embodied identity markers, just like skin tone, hair has also played a significant role in social stratification as well as identity construction, especially in the lives

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of women. As indicated earlier, skin tone/complexion is often intertwined with hair in that it affects the social mobility and status of particular people of colour in stratified societies. For example, external markers of identity were often the main features used during the process of social engineering with racist pseudo-biology informing laws to determine racial classifications and social status under apartheid (Posel, 2011; Ratele & Duncan, 2003). These classifications were radicalised, guided by white superiority, and charged by white supremacy, with race, value, and humanity measured by observable features of appearance with whiteness placed at the apex.

Different hairstyles have been used to indicate a person's status in society, including marital status, ethnic identity, age, religion, wealth, and position within the community across place and time (Mercer, 1994; Thompson, 2009). Hair is more than just a feature of aesthetics but also something that could essentially form part of identity itself. Although hair is an inert organic material it is often socialised in ways that give it meaning and value. Through cultural practices, hair is used as a medium to convey statements about self, society, and the value structures that bind them together (Majali et al., 2017; Mercer, 1987). Processed continuously by human hands, this raw material is groomed, cut, concealed, and worked upon to create symbolic value (Majali et al., 2017; Mercer, 1987; Mokoena, 2017).

However, distinctions of aesthetic value often happen along racial lines and binaries of superiority with white European hair typified as desirable, whereas black hair remains burdened with negative connotations. Through this polarization, or racist divides of worth, people of colour label hair as good/bad, beautiful/ugly, straight/kinky (Erasmus, 1997, 2000; Majali et al., 2017; Mercer, 1987, 1994). Hairstyling has been practiced by Coloured and black African women for centuries (Erasmus, 1997, 2000; Mercer, 1994; Mokoena, 2017). Over time, various meanings and symbols have been attached to hairstyles, as seen in depictions of the "Wolf, Mende, Mandingo, and the Yoruba people from Africa" (Patton, 2006 as cited in Majali et al., 2017, p. 159). Hair is more than just aesthetics; it informs

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identity and is used as a tool to create social cohesion and separation in African communities (Majali et al., 2017; Posel, 2011).

Hair straightening practices started with a hot comb, but have since been followed by more sophisticated chemical straighteners, called relaxers, and weaves, the practice of sewing synthetic straight hair into the natural hair (Erasmus, 1997, 2000; Thompson, 2009). Maart (2020) states that white beauty standards connote for women of colour that if they wore their natural hair they were regarded as angry, aggressive, or mental, and the hair needed to be relaxed so that they can be considered normal. During apartheid, having the right kind of hair could be the difference between being labelled a black, Coloured, or a white person, the difference in a high- and a low-class job, and the difference between rural and suburban housing. Using pseudo-biology, the apartheid government designed the pencil test to establish racial identity. It was a test based on physicality and tested the texture of hair and was highly influenced by racial stereotypes, myths, and cultural norms (Posel, 2011). A pen or pencil was placed into a person's hair, if it fell out the official would declare them Coloured, but if it got stuck the official labelled them Native (black). If a Coloured had a lighter complexion and the official believed they looked white, and the pencil fell out, a person could be classified or reclassified as White or pass-White, giving them rights and privileges at the top of the social hierarchy (Du Pré, 1994; Posel, 2011). Mattera (2010 as cited in Erasmus, 2000) recalls the process of the pencil test as follows:

> "'Excuse me big man, what's happening? Why are you guys all pulling your hair like that and where are you going?'
> 'To the barber-shop, boy; we're all dashing out for a haircut!'
> 'Why?'
> ....'Those bastards in there, those dogs are using matchsticks and pens to classify us!'
> 'Matchsticks? Pens?'
> 'Yes,' came the quick response. 'Matchsticks and *fokken* pens, which they run through our hair! And when the pen or matchstick gets stuck, the Boers shout: "Go to Room 47 and get a pass!" Like we were *fokken* natives. What the hell do they take us for?" (p.1).

This type of racial construction of identity and hair informs the social construction bringing about contestation within and between social groups. What is considered good or bad

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hair for Coloured people came with more than the beauty of aesthetics, but also with a hierarchical system of values within the Coloured culture, communities, and society in general (Erasmus, 2000). For Coloured people during apartheid, the pencil test was a physical manifestation of racial inferiority, but also represented the possibility of attaining racial superiority that is whiteness. The process of straightening hair through relaxers became a way to improve social mobility, thus appropriating whiteness in an attempt to escape otherness, be it Colouredness or blackness, and contesting systems of oppression. Bizela (2016) argues that the appropriation, or social whitening, as a result of desire, aspiration, and pursuit of whiteness, be it beauty standards or socially status, is seen as a form of escapism that creates self-hate.

Erasmus (2000) has argued that the process of getting her hair relaxed was not a unique experience for someone of colour, nor did it not make her feel or look white afterward. Instead, hair straightening may form part of cultural practices or rituals of affirmation and initiation (Erasmus, 2000). Notably, the process of getting hair relaxed involves cutting away of what Erasmus (1997) calls “the kitchen,” the kinky hair at the back of the head that resists assimilation as a sign of blackness and Colouredness. I could argue that “the kitchen” is both a sign of resistance to assimilation and evidence of how the Coloured identity is lessened through external markers. Hence, the hair that did not assimilate and straighten serves as evidence of, in the words of Fanon (1970), the unattainableness of whiteness for the person of colour. Black hair has been labelled as unprofessional, unacceptable, conservative, bringing about an overall negative experience for people of colour, which influences them to conform e.g., to the pressures of the work place (Dawson et al., 2019). Consequently, I ought to consider the possibility that the hair practices and rituals of black and Coloured people are potentially imbued with white standards and the need to assimilate, whether consciously or not. While practices like hair styling no doubt form part of rituals transferring culture (e.g., affirmation for young women) (Mercer, 1994; Thompson, 2009), it could also be regarded as

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a process affirming hierarchical value systems of injustice. The affirmation these systems could bring about the internalisation of oppressive social constructs (e.g., patriarchy, gender or sexism) (Maart, 2020), which socialise women to know their place in society or social settings (e.g. HWIs).

Even after the fall of apartheid, the politics of hair has continued to influence the democratic landscape. HWIs[10] in different South African provinces have not been kind to bodies of colour as it became known particularly between 2015 and 2021, when black and Coloured girls were disciplined or kicked out because their hair did not comply with Models-C school policies (Gaffey, 2017; Kgosana, 2021; Nicolson, 2016). Model-C schools are previously all white only schools that were reclassified in 1992 and they remain under the control of predominantly white school governing bodies. Though state-aided in post-apartheid, these governing bodies still have significant control over policies, finances, and properties (Christie & McKinney, 2017). The girls were ridiculed and called "idiots," "monkeys," "too smart for black people," and their hair described as "inappropriate," "untidy," and "un-ladylike," referred to as nests on their heads, and compared to steel-wool. The Model-C schools and their governing bodies requested that the girls either remove their dreadlocks/braids or straighten their afros. Others were subjected to a neatness test when a swim cap was placed on their heads, and if the cap did not fit on their heads, the hair was labelled as unruly, and it had to be cut.

After a race row erupted in Windsor House Academy (2017) and recently Cornwall Hill (2021) because of how students of colour were treated because of their hair, students of colour, parents, the provincial head of education, and political parties questioned the policies and code of conduct many HWIs still have (Gaffey, 2017; Kgosana, 2021). The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) said that it was deeply saddening that post democracy, society has failed to address what it called "white hegemony" and the struggle with transformation. These

[10] Schools that include Windsor House Academy, Cornwall Hill College (Johannesburg), Pretoria High School for Girls (Pretoria), Mafikeng High School (Mafikeng), Rhodes High School (Cape Town) and St. Michael's School for Girls (Bloemfontein).

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acts against black peoples hair were described as prejudiced and racist with some labelling hair as the touchstone for criticism and controversy of the school system (Gaffey, 2017; Nicolson, 2016). Furthermore, others regard hair as a tool utilised by HWIs to police certain hairstyles traditional for people of colour, like braids, afros, dreadlocks, and promote hair straightening to, "suppress blackness in its aesthetics and culture," to force students of colour to assimilate (Gqirana, 2016, p. 1).

Focusing particularly on her journey of coming of age, culture and identity formation, the poet Lynthia Julius states the following, unequivocally, "*fok gladwees"* (fuck straightening). By making such a bold statement, Julius (2020), is saying to fuck straightening, making whiter, assimilation, and losing herself in pursuit of a white beauty standard (Julius, 2020). The process of being accepted as a Coloured person for her was closely linked to looking the part in having the right skin colour and kind of hair. Though it was something encouraged by her mother, for Julius, the process of straightening her hair was an internal and external struggle that displaced her from her heritage. For Julius (2020), her past perceptions of the self still influences who she has to be in relation to others, she therefore writes from this place of rebellion (*Uit Die Kroes*), but also one of liberation and acceptance of who she is with her *kroes* (coarse) hair.

It is critical to state, however, that to be a person of colour and straighten one's hair is not an automatic sign of assimilation to, nor the affirmation of white standards. To do so would undermine the complexities of black and Coloured cultural practice and the creolization of cultures that informs identity (Erasmus, 1997, 2000). It would also make the assumption that people of colour, in this regard Coloured people, could not naturally have straight hair. Erasmus (1997) agrees with Mercer (1987) that there is a need to de-psychologise hair straightening as this form of hair styling could be regarded as an essentialist view of blackness or Colouredness. They argue that straightening is not all about mimicking

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whiteness but an alternate expression of Colouredness, a creative response to the experience of oppression and dispossession.

However, it would almost be irresponsible to say that an advert like the one Clicks ran in September 2020 was not inherently racist and did not imply a racialised hierarchy or glorify the image of white hair as the desired standard (Payne & Shob, 2020). The advert by Clicks and hair care brand Tresemmé essentially described women of colour's hair as inferior labelling it frizzy, dull, dry, and damaged, thus unappealing. In contrast to white women's hair that was labelled flat, fine, and normal, thus desirable. Many regarded the issue much deeper than just an advertisement blunder because the advert essentially described people of colour's hair as inferior to those of white people (Payne & Shob, 2020). Maart (2020) states that advertising like this remains problematic because the images suggests that people of colour, and women in particular, have an opportunity to buy out of the black and Coloured experience and into the white racialised experience at an unconscious level. The whole process of getting your hair done, or altering the state of their hair, does not necessarily result in assimilation in terms of appearance, behaviour, or being, but it may lessen the degree of black or Coloured consciousness that the individual has.

Viveros Vigoya (2015) refers to a process such as hair straightening as social whitening; it is an "escape from what one lacks in an attempt to create a better social existence in a context that values whiteness as a synonym for progress, civilization, and beauty" (p. 497). In this process, people of colour could be regarded as social whitening as transforming the perception of the self, making it more acceptable within the already internalized racist standards of being. Maart (2020) further adds that, the images or marketing strategy that Clicks used, is suggestive of a psychological "sense of lesser than," and that you will only be worthy or normal if you have this. The Clicks advert relies on insecurities instilled through years of oppression, for example racism, patriarchy, gender, sexism and the internalization of these constructs (Maart, 2020). Further, Maart (2020) argues that the advert

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promotes a different reality to the one natural coarse hair provides and operates on an unconscious level that influences identity and shames the self, which is unavoidably tied to self-doubt and self-hatred when the product fails.

Apart from the aesthetic value of hair, it has also been used as a means to combat social and political injustices, namely as a statement of intent and defiance. Hair has thus been used to reclaim essential values, like social and political identity. The afro hairstyle, for example, has served as the symbol of Blackness, rejection of oppression, and a sign of cultural resistance (Chutel, 2018; Erasmus, 2000; Kelley, 1997). Used as a symbol of Black Power in America during the1960's, the afro movement proclaimed that black is not just acceptable, but beautiful, thus contesting whiteness (Kelley, 1997). Creating such a discourse of black consciousness around a hairstyle became a means to contest whiteness and promote Black Pride.

Recent movements regarding to embodied identity markers like AMAFROCOL from Colombia, Going Natural on the global scale, and the *Kroes* Rocks movement in South Africa indicate that people of colour are seemingly rejecting white Eurocentric standards of beauty and aesthetics (AMAFROCOL, 2018; Ndichu & Upadhyaya, 2019; Thomas, 2019). More recently, the rhetoric about racial and ethnic discrimination against identities of colour as a result of the standards of whiteness and social whitening has been highlighted in Latin America, in Brazil and Colombia, the Caribbean, and South Africa (Chutel, 2018; Viveros Vigoya, 2015). For Afro-descendants in Colombia the impact of skin tone and hair plays an enormous role in the perceptions of the black self in relation to others as they have discussions about social justice and denouncing the intersections between racism and sexism. As a result, the social justice movement, *Asociation de Mujeres Afrocolombianas* (Association of Afro-Colombian Women) (AMAFROCOL), was created to diffuse racialized tension within the culture of black people in communities, to defend, and to vindicate their rights through socio-cultural productive projects (AMAFROCOL, 2018). The global Going

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Natural hair movement and the *Kroes* Rocks Movement in South Africa, has affirmed Coloured and black aesthetics bringing about liberation, confidence, and a great sense of pride (Chutel, 2018; Thomas, 2019). The process of transitioning, which is the move from chemical straightener to natural, is more than external modification. Chutel (2018) argues that this transition is not just external, but also internal and psychological, equating it to the reclamation of power especially in spaces that deemed nappy, *cabelo crespo, kroes* hair unacceptable, unruly, and unprofessional. People of colour use hair in this context as a means to resist imposed ideas of Western/European beauty and to promote a black anti-racist and prejudice aesthetic.

2.5. Theoretical Framework

In addition to cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977; Power, 1999; Wallace, 2018) and Critical Race Theory (Caldwell, 1996), this research study mainly drew on Post-Colonial Theory as a framework (Du Bois, 1903; Fanon, 1970). The premise of these theories is built on the power dynamics and the social relations at work within both culture and society and the influence it has on identity construction and social contexts. In essence, one can say that these theories do not look at who people are but how dominant external powers and structures can influence who an individual can become—and in turn how behaviour is affected in stratified societies. However, though these theories are often focused on social oppression, they all aspire to a psychology of liberation—developing an awareness for self-determination (Bhabha, 1987). These theories will be used in this study to reflect on the process of identity formation and the social contexts in which this process happened.

Frantz Fanon (1970) argues that identity is a social construction, in that it is formed by cultural and social experiences, the knowledge of and the meanings ascribed to the self (or the individual). For Fanon the motivation behind the identity of the black individual is a desire to become white. This pathological desire is forced upon them by a predominantly white society, culture, and the social conditions that define a particular place and time (Hook, 2004).

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Identity is, therefore, a construct that is influenced by power dynamics embedded in societies, open to negotiation and change, thus malleable over time, space, and experience.

However, in negotiating the dynamics of identity in their social world, black people (including all persons of colour), then engage in practices such as marrying a white person, skin lightening, adopting the accent of white people, and hair straightening in an attempt to lessen their blackness (Fanon, 1970). Through this process of lactification, defined as an assimilation or the whitening of the conscious, an individual affirms the supposed global standards of whiteness, and at the same time the person of colour becomes estranged and alienated from their sense of self, their people, their own bodies, and eventually their humanity by denying their blackness and Colouredness. The affirmation of these supposed standards create a "Manichean world" where whiteness and fairness are associated with innocence and purity, while blackness is associated with evil, dirt, and death (Fanon, 1970). This colour-coded imaginary furthermore permeates cultural references like blacklist, blackmail, white knight, white as snow, and black sheep (Jones, 2001). The white Western Eurocentric culture supposedly upholds universal standards of value but actually only represents those of selected groups, cultures, or societies (Hook, 2004). Important resources that form part of people of colour's identity such as land, natural, cultural and historical resources are also confiscated by members of the dominant white culture (Fanon, 1970). Thiong'o (2005) states that the colonisation of the land, its people, and its culture, in short, is a colonisation of the mind. The black or Coloured self is coerced into feeling suspicious of their own blackness or Colouredness, creating an inferiority complex.

Although the work of Fanon is regarded as a relentless assault on racist theoretical formulations and oppressive structural elaborations, he has been criticized for being overtly sexist and that in his work he undervalues the various forms of opposition and resistance within his representations colonialism and apartheid (Bulhan, 1985; Hook, 2004). According to Caute (1970), Fanon creates what he regards as essentialist and static categories of

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personhood. Notably, Bulhan (1985) has argued that because Fanon does not produce his work methodologically or systematically, nor according to established empirical principles of psychology, one should be cautious of being selective towards certain concepts and arriving at categorical conclusions. However, Hook (2004) highlights that for post-colonial theorists such as Homi Bhabha (1994), Fanon has provided the starting point for analysis within the post-colonial context and argues that it is not Fanon's objective to do racist damage but to warn against the negative effects of internalizing racism and objectifying terms of identity.

Similarly to what Fanon described as a desire to become white and the process of assimilation, Bourdieu (1977) speaks of his notion of cultural capital which is defined as, "instruments for the appropriation of symbolic wealth socially designated as worthy of being sought and possessed" (p. 488). Acquiring cultural capital would enable a person of colour to navigate dominant white spaces more successfully, or as Cleophas (2018) puts it, promote social mobility in a stratified society. Bourdieu defines fields as spaces like universities that indicate knowledge, status, and competitive positions that people or actors try to accumulate and monopolize different forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1977; Power, 1999). These different forms of cultural capital extend the concept of capital beyond economic gain, understanding that this type of capital also has the ability to, "reproduce itself, produce profits, expand and contains the tendency to persist" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 241).

The four main types of capital Bourdieu (1977) identified are economic, social, symbolic, and cultural. The three forms in which cultural capital exists are institutionalised, objectified, and the embodied state. The institutionalised state of cultural capital is reflected in educational qualifications and professional credentials while the objectified state, represents the material production of "art works, galleries, museums, laboratories, scientific instruments, books … [and] artefacts of various kinds"(Bourdieu, 1986, p. 245). The embodied state is a form of cultural capital which refers to the qualities of one's mind or body in the objectified state—which could include the skills that one has, dialects, mannerisms or other external

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markers of identity (Bourdieu, 1977; Power, 1999; Wallace, 2018). Individuals thus try to accumulate and monopolize cultural capital because of the competitiveness, status, or knowledge within a particular domain, like a university (Bourdieu, 1977; Power, 1999). How cultural capital manifests or is obtained becomes important because dominant social classes determine how the cultural capital is gained based on how people look and behave (Power, 1999).

An individual who wants to accumulate or monopolize cultural capital would need to buy membership into these classes or cultures with the same type of capital, for example changing their hair or skin tone. Success in a particular field or society is dictated by the extent to which an individual absorbs or assimilates to the dominant culture and the amount of capital they bought through their adaptation. The amount of cultural capital an individual has results in shared cultural capital with others and forming a new collective identity (Power, 1999). However, the cost of this new identity and social capital is expensive as the person loses their cultural and personal identity to gain a new collective identity.

In utilizing Bourdieu's framework as an analytical tool, one should guard against reducing cultural capital to whiteness and material capital. Though cultural capital remains a classist notion it does not mean that race and ethnicity are not implicated its expression. For Fanon, class and race cannot be separated in a colonial Africa or apartheid. He states that "you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich" (Fanon, 1970, p. 40). Wallace (2018) argues that though a case could be made for an enduring relationship between cultural capital and whiteness, it is the paucity of research on black and ethnic minorities, especially the middle class, that paints blackness synonymous with cultural, and material poverty. Taking a Critical Race Theory (CRT) exposition on community cultural wealth, Yosso (2005) critiques the misuse of Bourdieu's framework that unintentionally promotes ethno-racial deficiency when it operates on the assumption that people of colour lack cultural and social capital that is essential for social mobility. Yosso (2005), through the

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lens of CRT, mentions several different forms of capital that constitute cultural wealth among communities of colour include: linguistic capital, various language abilities, aspirational capital, resilience to pursue goals despite difficulties, navigational capital, having the capacity to successfully navigate historically hostile environments, resistant capital, "counter-cultural knowledge and skills that challenge the presence and perpetuation of inequality and familial capital, cultural knowledge, memories and pedagogies preserved through varied formations of kinship" (Wallace, 2018, p. 470).

Critical Race Theory (CRT) was initially employed within legal studies but has been extended and developed as a reflective tool use by researchers in sociology, history, and education to be consciously aware of power dynamics at work in hierarchies that favours one group over another. CRT argues that race is socially constructed and not based on biology (Caldwell, 1996). Within CRT, race functions as a concept constructed to maintain the interest of the white people that created it, advocating the narrative of the dominant culture. CRT scholars (such as Graham et al., 2011; Quaye & Chang, 2012; Solórzano et al., 2000) argue that CRT provides a particular lens to illuminate and understand racial powers, White supremacy, privilege, and systems of oppression which are maintained over a period of time. Importantly, CRT also advocates for racial emancipation and anti-subordination from these power structures that perpetuate the marginalization of people of colour. While CRT looks at race from a dualistic American perspective that focuses black and white stories and culture, the tenet of intersectionality within CRT focuses on the multidimensionality of oppression e.g., racism, sexism, colourism and classism (Graham et al., 2011; Quaye & Chang, 2012; Solórzano et al., 2000). Thus, it provides perspective on the position of Coloured people in South Africa and also how the persona of HWIs such as universities can affect that position (Caldwell, 1996).

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2.6. Conclusion

Chapter 2 described the literature on Coloured identity, HWIs, colourism, hair, and the theoretical framework that guides this research study. Racist ideologies of being have resulted in the idealisation and normalisation of whiteness, often making it the yardstick for social status, morality, and beauty, which in turn affect identity performance and construction, especially that of people of colour. Because societies are dominated by racist ideologies that value whiteness, the whiteness is often appropriated to facilitate upward social mobility. Policies and laws like those during apartheid utilised external markers of identity to determine race, worth, and social function against whiteness. This valuation resulted in lighter skin complexion and straight hair being idealised and pursued as something to strive toward, making the acquisition of whiteness the standard to be considered fully human. Whiteness as a measure of worth is still used post democracy facilitated through hair straightening practices and skin bleaching and whitening.

However, during apartheid being lighter in complexion, having acceptable hair, and being regarded as the middle of the racial hierarchy, upward social mobility came with the most rewards to those who were classified Coloured. External markers of identity like hair have informed Coloured people's identity and their expressions in HWIs. This identity is often still marked by an assimilationist element and apartheid notions of race in relations to hair and skin complexion. Literature on HWIs show that an assimilationist agenda is often enforced because of whiteness that permeates these institutions. However, though HWIs create toxic environments for social identity formation, literature fails to show how colourism and hair prejudice are affected by whiteness in HWI or how these are used to acculturate. Thus, to investigate external markers of identity, this research aims to use Critical Race Theory, Post-Colonial Theory, and Cultural Capital as theoretical frameworks to frame and reflect on power relations within both culture and society and the influence these have on identity construction of students and social their contexts. These theories provide a framework

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to assess the dominance of external powers, like whiteness and institutional structures like HWIs, and the level of social oppression these exert on marginalised identities like the Coloured identity. In addition, these frameworks provide tools to see how and why whiteness might be acquired by students of colour to gain cultural capital, navigate dominant white spaces, and possibly improve their social mobility.

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CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I provide a comprehensive description and rationale of the research methodology employed in this research study. I used a qualitative approach grounded in phenomenology as it was utilised and considered the most appropriate to meet the study objectives. Furthermore, the chapter elaborates on the data collection methods and concludes with the ethical consideration that the I had to adhere to.

3.1. Research Design

I utilised a cross-sectional qualitative study design and employed a phenomenological and exploratory approach to investigate Coloured students' experiences at an HWI. For Creswell (2011, 2013), in order to understand human experiences, social realities and how people make sense of these, a qualitative approach is the preferred method. Qualitative research is a valued paradigm of inquiry, as it generates rich and detailed data that contributes to an in-depth understanding of a subject or context (Creswell, 2013). In addition, the complexity that surrounds a given phenomenon requires rigorous and methodical methods to create useful results. Collecting data through this method is both rich and comprehensive, thus enabling a complete understanding to emerge concerning complex phenomena such as external markers of identity (i.e., hair and skin) colour and orientation to whiteness at an HWI (Wisdom & Creswell, 2013). The research study is therefore exploratory in nature as it aims to understand and explore experiences of Coloured students' regarding external markers of identity (the phenomenon).

3.2. Phenomenology

Phenomenology was utilised as a theoretical framework to underpin this study and explore the research aims and questions. Phenomenology as a design inquiry originates from philosophy and psychology and seeks to describe the meaning and significance of experiences as described by participants. Coined and developed by Edmund Husserl, the method of phenomenology has four characteristics, namely description, reduction, essence and

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intentionality (Čapek & Loidolt, 2021; Finlay, 2011; Umanailo, 2019). Phenomenology is descriptive as it seeks to describe instead of merely explaining phenomena. The method follows the process of reduction in that it tries to remove assumptions and prejudices that could impede the description of the observations (Dahlberg et al., 2008). By being descriptive through reduction, phenomenology focuses on the core meaning of the experience, exploring through intuition, reflection, and imagination to determine whether a character is an essential essence of a phenomenon.

The final characteristic of descriptive phenomenology is intentionality: the method aims to correlate the experience of reality and the subjective interpretations of reality, thus the consciousness thereof (Umanailo, 2019). The intentionality of phenomenology, therefore, considers the structure of various types of experiences ranging from perception, imagination, emotion, thought, memory, desire, and volition to bodily awareness, embodied-, social-, and even linguistic activity (Dahlberg et al., 2008; Wisdom & Creswell, 2013). Phenomenological research thus requires the researcher or scholar to become familiar with the consciousness of participant interpretations of human experience or reality.

I employed a descriptive phenomenological approach to understand and explore how self-identifying Coloured students constructed their identity within an HWI, the given social context, regarding the phenomenon of external markers of identity, regularly experienced (Creswell, 2013). Phenomenology was selected because the present research study was an exploratory investigation undertaken to better understand the consciousness of self-identifying Coloured students— discovering the motives and meaning of actions related to hair and colourism at an HWI. In essence, phenomenology was used to interpret participant views, behaviour, and attitudes regarding external markers of identity (e.g., hair and colourism). I concluded with in-depth qualitative interviews guided by an interview schedule to interpret reality and find commonalities in individual experiences. The phenomenological approach allowed the creation of themes and sub-themes from the data.

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Descriptive phenomenology remains useful as a design inquiry though criticised for its assumption that for the research to hold its integrity, the researcher must be impartial to their own and the participants' awareness of prior experiences concerning a subject matter (LeVasseur, 2003). For Husserl, it was both a possibility and a benefit to evaluate and understand other people's experiences without relying on your own experience or understanding. Such impartiality removes possible bias, thus allowing the research to reflect only participants' understandings and be subject experts of and in their narratives. However, Dahlberg et al. (2008) argue that it is impractical for researchers to utilise this method to remain completely independent. The researcher needs to be able to envision themselves in the participants' situation to fully understand their subjective experience. Thus, to make room for researcher bias, Gustin (2018) suggests the technique of bridling, which he describes as "holding back the influence of preunderstanding in order to slow down the process of understanding in a way that allows the phenomenon to be visible" (p.3).

Bridling thus allowed me to acknowledge my biases and prior judgements through reflexivity, in an attempt to keep my judgements from unduly influencing the research (Dahlberg et al., 2008). Once I interpreted the data, I made notes in both Atlas.ti (note function) and in my reflexivity journal about my own perceptions on a subject matter. For example, I come from an HBU, thus when participant experiences were interpreted as finding the need to dissociate with HBU due to perceived racial stereotypes, I wrote down how I perceived these institutions. I believe they are underfunded, do have more students of colour but are not necessarily inferior to HWIs or that association with them makes one inferior. The process of bridling therefore allowed me to be sceptical of the data and to make sure it speaks to participant experiences. Since I grew up in a Coloured community, I have certain biases regarding HWIs and opinions about hair prejudice and colourism, the process of bridling made me aware of how I could influence the interpretation of the data. In addition, I added a section on my reflexivity as the researcher later in this chapter.

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3.3. Method of Data Collection

3.3.1. Research participants. I employed both purposive and snowball sampling methods by randomly inviting students, born post-1994, between 18 and 25 years of age to participate in my research. This inclusion is important because the main aim of the present investigation involves exploring constructions of Coloured identity under democracy, which signalled the integration and diversification of HWIs. The sampling was purposive as it was selective or subjective during the first stage, looking for a representative sample with specific characteristics; whether they self-identify as Coloured person and ever purposefully altered or consciously stopped altering the natural state of their hair (Bryman, 2012; Joshi, 2015). In addition, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions to participants, the second stage adopted a snowball sampling approach in that I asked existing participants to nominate other possible participants known to them who fulfil the inclusion criteria of the study.

Recruitment, which started in May 2020 and ended in November 2020, was done by sending a poster via official Stellenbosch communication platforms and posting it to social media platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram. The poster invited students who met the inclusion criteria; (i) self-identified as Coloured to (ii) share their story (experiences) involving hair (*hairstory*) at Stellenbosch University (Appendix A). Individuals were asked to DM (direct message) me to indicate their interest to participate in the study. Participants were also asked to send the research advert (Appendix A) or my contact details to other potential participants who they thought might be interested in the study.

Participants' *hairstory* were assessed by answering yes to any two of the following three questions that formed part of the screening interview (Appendix B); (i) "Do you have a story about hair?", (ii) "Have you ever purposefully stopped altering the natural state of your hair while at SU?" and (iii) "Have you ever consciously changed the natural state of your hair while at SU?"

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While the initial participant sample target was twelve to fifteen, it should be noted that the study was conducted during a pandemic, which impacted the feasibility of completing this research promptly. A new Ethics application had to be submitted that allowed for safe and no physical contact virtual interviewing. The new regulations set by the Stellenbosch University (Humanities Research Ethics Committee) (see Appendix H) in line with Government COVID-19 regulations also meant that the initial recruitment strategies had to be changed, as it was impossible to put up posters around campus. In addition, students often felt overwhelmed in dealing with changes brought about by the pandemic and were less inclined to participate in research. All these factors contributed to fewer students (10) being recruited for participation. Though the pandemic resulted in a small number of participants, this does not detract from the quality of the data. In qualitative research it is not necessarily about acquiring a large sample size, but rather about the richness and depth of experiences and perspectives of the sample, be it small (Creswell, 2013). Though the sample size is small data saturation can be reached when no new information is obtained, which is determined by the progression of the study (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Hickman, 2017).

3.3.2. Data Collection Techniques. Data for the study was gathered through semi-structured interviews conducted in English, either via mobile instant messaging interviews (MIMI) or Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) (Kaufmann & Peil, 2019). I selected interviews over other methods, like questionnaires, because interviews allow for in-depth data collection through open-ended questions in line with the phenomenological approach. For Kvale (2009), conducting the interview involves exchanging views, knowledge and opinions between the researcher and the participant. Furthermore, the ability to follow up and clarify answers during an interview makes possible the critical exploration of participants' experience and behaviour, thereby delving into what Kvale (2009) describes as “nuggets of essential meaning” (p. 35).

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In their conceptualisation of VoIP technologies as a means to do qualitative interviews, Lo Iacono et al. (2016) maintains that even though there are some limitations, VoIP technologies (like Skype and Zoom) could be a valuable alternative—but even more so a complementary method of qualitative data collection (Kaufmann & Peil, 2019). VoIP technology has been used successfully in online ethnographies, instant message analysis, and blog analysis, prompting exploration in academic research while providing access to participants across geographic boundaries (Lo Iacono et al., 2016; Skype, 2013; WhatsApp, 2019; Zoom, 2020). In addition to geographical advantages, other advantages of doing interviews via a VoIP platform like Zoom includes low financial cost and elimination of travel, which allows the interview to become more fluid and flexible in terms of time and venue (Kaufmann & Peil, 2019; Lo Iacono et al., 2016).

Although there are potential limitations, including establishing rapport, limited non-verbal cues (like body language), and distortions in the background, virtual interviews also bring about new possibilities. With this technology, participants can present themselves in a significant space, for example a bedroom, study or one where they feel comfortable, which in turn can add a new level of analysis (Lo Iacono et al., 2016). The option to audio- and video record these interviews furthermore enables the researcher to focus on asking questions and probing rather than writing notes profusely, which might cause distractions for both the participant and interviewer.

During the interview, I followed an interview schedule with several pre-defined, open-ended questions to explore individuals' opinions, feelings, and personal experiences about hair, colourism, and whiteness in relation to their identity. In particular, the interviews focused on exploring and charting the experience of whiteness for these participants, rather than determining beforehand what whiteness or white norms may be. In this way, the questions facilitated the discussion of the subjective experiences of the participants social identities. This qualitative approach also allowed me to probe specific themes or responses in

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more depth as these surfaced during the interview. Semi-structured interviews thus enabled participants to convey their understanding of a topic in a meaningful manner (Neuman, 2000), allowing the researcher to interpret meaning ascribed to specific experiences (Wilson & Maclean, 2011).

3.4. Materials

Telephonic screening questionnaire. Prior to the qualitative Zoom interviews, I first conducted a screening interview, which formed part of the data collection process. The screening interview was used to establish whether participants meet the inclusion criteria (Appendix B). The interview was also used to determine the preferred interview method and the internet platform (VoIP) that the participant would like to utilise for the virtual setting. Participants then had the option to select from either one of the following VoIP platforms; Zoom, Skype or WhatsApp, based on their smart device, software, accessibility, and internet connection strength. If participants were willing to participate in the research and met the inclusion criteria, their contact details were captured and used to schedule an interview. After the screening interview, participants received the informed consent forms (see Appendix C) in advance via email or WhatsApp, which they had to return before the virtual interview.

Demographic Questionnaire. I used a demographic questionnaire to obtain descriptive information about participants (Appendix D). These included questions inquiring about aspects such as "what is their home language," citizenship, proficiency in English, whether they are "comfortable completing the interview in English." Other questions asked participants to specify their religion, gender and "How would you like to be identified in terms of race/population group, if a different option was available?"

Identification Questionnaire. I employed an identification questionnaire adapted from Leach et al. (2008) (Appendix E), to measure ingroup identification, to assess the strength of participants' identification with being Coloured. High or low identifiers on the scale indicate the complexities around Coloured identity, which allows for a consequential measurement of

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how they feel about being classified as such and enabled a comparison with data from the interviews. The scale includes both a motivational component (group-level self-investment) and group-level self-definition (perceived similarity to the group). The scale consists of 14 statements evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale anchored at 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) (Hackel et al., 2017). The scale, therefore, measures two components of identification: (i) the extent to which a participant feels invested in identifying as a Coloured person, and (ii) the extent participants define themselves concerning others identifying as Coloured (Hackel et al., 2017).

The scale shows high internal reliability ($\alpha = .83$), construct reliability, predictive, and discriminant validity (Hackel et al., 2017; Leach et al., 2008).

Qualitative Interview Schedule. I employed a semi-structured interview schedule as the research instrument (Appendix F) to conduct the interview. The semi-structured interview, which was conducted (predominantly) in English, aimed to establish students' understanding, experience, and orientation to whiteness and the extent to which certain external markers (including hair, skin colour) serve as representation for identity constructions. The interview schedule consisted of several open-ended questions, such as "What, according to you, are the markers of Coloured identity?", "How important is your hair to who you are as a person (identity)?" and "In your opinion, if you could change the shade of your skin tone, how would it affect your experiences at SU?"

The interview schedule was amended twice. After an initial pilot, the schedule was amended to give it a more natural flow to the interview by adding questions to establish rapport and get the conversation started. For example: "Tell me about yourself." Questions were amended by making them more personal and directing them at the individual level instead of the group experience. For example, questions like "Do you think Coloured people behave or are treated differently if they have a lighter skin tone at SU" was changed to "In your opinion, if you could change the shade of your skin tone, how would it affect your

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experiences at SU? And why?" Although some of the questions were thought-provoking and difficult to answer, participants responded well to the questions as they understood what was asked of them. One participant preferred to respond in Afrikaans, and I acceded to this request. This request led to a blended approach, in that where possible, I would translate the questions in Afrikaans, but where necessary, keep the keyword or phrase in English to retain its original meaning. For example: "*Het jy al ooit gevind dat jy iets doen soos* code-switching" instead of "Have you ever found yourself doing something similar to code-switching."

3.5. Procedure

Once participants responded to the study advertisement, a telephonic screening interview was performed to assess eligibility and inform potential participants about the research topic, aims, objectives, the research procedure, and the value they could add. As part of the selection process, I informed participants that they may approach me with any concerns should they have any.

After the participants agreed to participate in the research, I used their contact information to schedule an interview and send them the informed consent documents, which had to be returned before the virtual interview via Zoom (selected by all participants). Furthermore, participants were required to complete the demographic questionnaire and the self-identification questionnaire and return this information either before or after the interview. Participants were allowed to return their responses in a digital format via email or WhatsApp by either scanning them or taking a photo.

Zoom generates a personalised Meeting ID and Password that is unique to every interview for every participant. Along with these login details, Zoom also creates a login link that is unique to the meeting scheduled, which only allows the participants who have the link to join the meeting.

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I scheduled an interview at a time and in a convenient and comfortable space for the participant. The interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes. This period allowed probing to obtain significant depth and data richness while also maximising participants' concentration, thus guarding against respondent fatigue to optimise data quality.

As per the consent form and in line with ethics approval, participants were informed before the interview was scheduled and before the interview commenced that their participation was entirely voluntary, that they could withdraw from the study at any stage should they wish to, and that they were under no obligation to answer questions that may feel uncomfortable or sensitive. All collected information remained confidential throughout the research process by assigning participants random numbers and pseudonyms during the transcription and analysis of the data.

3.6. Data Analysis

The qualitative data from the MIMI interviews recorded via Zoom, a VoIP platform, were analysed through Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis assisted by the ATLAS.ti, version 8 computer software. Thematic analysis is helpful in this paradigm as it adds a rigorous and methodical method to the data analysis processes and produces useful results. Due to the need for researchers to conduct trustworthy qualitative data, thematic analysis becomes a sophisticated tool that helps to determine the credibility of the analysis process (Thorne, 2000). In addition, because thematic analysis has theoretical freedom, the flexible approach can be adapted to fit the needs of a particular study and still provide a rich, detailed and complex account of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; King, 2004).

Data for the present research was analysed in a deductive fashion in line with the phenomenological approach. Analysing data in this way allowed participants to be the subject experts and I could deduce themes from their experiences. This approach to data analysis was an attempt to both highlight constructs (e.g., colourism, whiteness, the aesthetic value of identity markers) and add novel contributions to knowledge production. The process of data

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collection started with a semi-structured interview recorded via the via Zoom application (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

After the data collection process, I immersed myself in the data, in a process known as familiarisation, the first phase, by transcribing the audio recordings verbatim, reading through the transcription and making field notes. Thus, I formulated ideas and points of discussion from the participant responses (Brown et al., 2006; Madill & Gough, 2008; Morrow, 2005). Per ethical obligations, the anonymity of the participants were ensured in accordance with the phenomenology framework by assigning random names to participants or allowing them to provide pseudonyms (Lacey & Luff, 2009).

The second phase involved grouping the transcriptions and breaking them down into units of meaning through coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This phase was done primarily with the qualitative data analysis & research software ATLAS.ti version 8 (Brown et al., 2006). The ATLAS.ti, a computer-assisted system of data analysis, is a powerful workbench in the way of coding transcribed interviews and makes the analysis procedure more systematic and flexible in terms of revising analytical processes (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Using ATLAS.ti, part of this process included the identification and classifications of quotes emerging from phrases or common ideas. For example, a quote would say that “for some odd reason, hair is so important when it comes to… I mean to coloured people” and phrase will be coded as “hair has value”. After generating a code sheet from ATLAS.ti, sub-themes were created. This third phase involved clustering the units of meaning constructed from the coding step into sub-themes to systematically identify themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

For example, the codes “assumed standard,” “age related,” “aspire to whiteness”, “level of whiteness,” “forced to assimilate,” “prove worth” were grouped into a sub theme, “standards of being.” All these codes refer to or suggest a standard that existed or has to be adhered to. Themes were then created by grouping sub-themes together that have the same idea or highlights the same subject from a different perspective. For example, “hair and

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colour(ism) in relation to identity" and "conditions of worth become internalised values" were grouped together under the theme Hairarchy (see Chapter 4). The themes that were created convey shared experiences, or the most common aspects of participants that I sought to understand.

A thematic framework was created that serves as an audit trail which forms part of the fourth (reviewing themes) and fifth (defining and naming themes) phases (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The emerging thematic framework was discussed with the research supervisors to scrutinise and verify codes and themes in the process of triangulation. Codes and themes were consequently reviewed, defined, named, and renamed to reach a consensus. Though codes were already formed in ATLAS.ti, the program allowed me to rename codes or add multiple codes to the same code. For example, the codes "white people things" and "white culture" were renamed "whiteness". Similarly, the theme "Being a Coloured in Democracy" was omitted as it did not speak to the objectives of the study. In the same way the theme "A Contemporary White University" was changed to "Existing in a Predominantly White Space" as this described the subthemes better. Producing the report was the sixth and final phase (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The purpose of the write-up is to present a systematic, coherent, and logical account of the data that informs the themes with quotes (extracts from the raw data) to highlight points of interpretation as per the phenomenological approach. This phase also adds depth and richness to the reported data, thus rendering the finding more than a descriptive account.

Several methods of verification were used to show the trustworthiness of the researcher's analysis. I engaged with relevant literature to frame and review the findings of the data. In addition, quotes were utilised to support the findings concerning the data to establish the validity and credibility of the findings. Furthermore, I also conducted peer reviews by consulting my masters' colleagues and senior researchers on the findings, supporting quotes and themes (Creswell, 2013). Lastly, to ensure quality control, I also

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consciously engaged in reflexivity through a journal that included bridling or bracketing to acknowledge my biases and prior judgements. Member checking has also proven to be useful tool in exploring the credibility of the results (Creswell, 2013), but due to the unforeseen circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic this was a challenge. Coupled with constricted time frames for submissions and the constant restructuring of the academic calendar it meant that students were not as accessible as they were or normally would have been.

3.7. Reflexivity

Reflexivity relates to how the research process and the researcher could influence the data collected or the research outcomes, including experiences and biases held by the researcher like beliefs or prior assumptions (Bryman, 2012; Finlay, 2002). It is important to state that I (the researcher) identify as a cisgender, heterosexual, KhoiSan male (an ethnic identity classified as part of the Coloured racial categorisation). I also spent two years of secondary education at an HWI or former Model-C school in the Western Cape. Part of my identity as a student is also linked to being a *"Matie"* at an HWI (namely Stellenbosch University). Being a Matie like the participants, I have also had to come to terms with what it means to be a person of colour in HWIs and grappling with the kind of identity accepted within the space. I am currently a Master's student at Stellenbosch University. I completed my undergraduate degree at the University of the Western Cape and hold an honours degree in Psychology from Stellenbosch University.

I grew up in a Coloured community, and from a young age, my experiences have been impacted by what was valued or respected in the larger community and artificial pressures to act or look a certain way. I was always the one with a "white accent." This accent was not a conscious decision, as I had this accent ever since I can remember. My accent was not a problem for those I grew up with, but whenever I spoke to people from other neighbourhoods, they would ask what was wrong with me, accusing me of "acting white" ("*hy hou vir hom*

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wit"). Thus, according to some, I lessened my 'Colouredness' and increased my whiteness through my accent, which was not my intention. Various white people have applauded me because I do not speak Afrikaans like "them" (referring to other Coloured people) and understand me.

I also encountered and experienced the effects of colourism early on. I was born to a mother called derogatory names and did not experience the level of favour her siblings enjoyed because of her darker skin tone. I was then raised by a different mother who was constantly questioned and ridiculed for her eldest son being white because she was dark-skinned. My mother comically tells of how she used to tell people that she is the baby's (my brother's) nanny because most people would assume that she stole the child.

Regarding hair, I was always told by the grown-ups in my community that I should choose right when it comes to my life partner and think about my lineage. They would say something like, "*jy moet kyk of daar kinders agter op die stoep sit Lee*" (I must look if children are sitting on the stoep), which referred to the hair at the back of a girl's head. It meant that if she had a *pittekop* /*kroes* /coarse hair, or hair that is not "straight-ish," she was not the one because our children's hair would look like that. Although Coloured identity is contentious, I acknowledge that many attach positive value to this racial/social classification to self-identify and that I was raised within this cultural and historical context.

To guard against potential biases, preconceptions, and the asymmetrical power relations between the researcher and participants, I used a reflexive journal to record details of how I could have influenced the data of each interview (Finlay, 2002; Kvale, 2002). The journal sensitised me as a researcher/interviewer to my subjectivities whilst making me aware of the impact these could have on the credibility of the research (Kvale, 2002). Regarding the research participants, apart from the screening interview, no relationship was established with any participant before the commencement of the study. However, it should be mentioned that I did my Honours degree with two of the female participants. Here I believe that because we

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knew each other it made them more relaxed and open to share their experiences. In addition, the participant named Alice and I are both students linked to the Historical Trauma and Transformation Centre and have discussed my research study during the conceptualisation phase. I believe this is evident in her responses from time to time, for example, when she would state, *"I feel like this is not what you want to hear."* She was thus included in the study because she contacted me out of her own volition when she saw my advert. Alice did not necessarily participate because we had the discussion. Furthermore, it would not be fair towards her by disregarding her willingness to share her experience as a Coloured woman about her hair and HWIs.

I must also state that regarding my participant, Samantha, I did not ask as many secondary questions as others because she indicated a history of depression and anxiety challenges. Samantha was scared that she might answer the questions wrong and indicated that she was nervous. As a result, I did not want to press to much out of fear of triggering her anxiety. After we discussed her mental history, we agreed that she would answer and share her experience to the best of her ability and notify me if I pressurised her or when she is struggling to express herself. I also allowed her to take time when she could not articulate herself, and assured her that she could relax, as it is about her experience; thus, no answer can be wrong.

As reflected in the journal, I was also constantly aware that I am a cisgender, heterosexual male asking mostly females about their experiences. However, I think that someone engaged with them about a topic that affects them disproportionately on many levels made the participants more valuable to share their experiences and perspectives.

Finally, because I conducted the interviews during a global pandemic (COVID-19), one should be conscious of the impact it might have had on the individual and their community's psyche. The participants and I were very aware of the predicament we were all in regarding personal health and how it affected our output. Therefore, all the conversations started with a

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reflection on how we were dealing with the current situation as students and how it affected our current and future situation. This kind of reflection made it possible to connect on a human level and made both the participants and I aware of the current state of the world and that we were all affected by it in different ways.

3.8. Ethical Considerations

Before the commencement of this study, I obtained ethical approval from the Departmental Ethics Screening Committee (DESC) within the Psychology Department and the Ethics Committee for Social, Behavioural and Educational Research (REC: SBER) of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, as well as institutional permission from Stellenbosch University.

Informed consent was obtained before the interview process commenced (Department of Health [DoH], 2015). As per the screening interview, informed consent was obtained in two ways; and first, participants had to sign their consent forms by agreeing on a date and responding via email before the interview. Secondly, before the actual interviews commenced, participants were informed that they were being recorded and had a second opportunity to verbally consent.

Participants were informed that their participation is voluntary and can withdraw at any stage of the research process. Specifically, if they felt the need to withdraw, they were provided with the option to either destroy their consent form and/or retract their verbal consent and data (for both the interview and questionnaire) or allow the data that had already been collected to be used in the final write-up.

Confidentiality was ensured by assigning random participant numbers, and pseudonyms were used during the transcription and analysis of the data (DoH, 2015). No personal data were used in the transcription of video and audio into text. The VoIP platform Zoom encrypts recorded data, which essentially renders data into code that prevent unauthorised access. This recorded data were saved straight to my hard drive on a password-protected laptop. The data

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provided by participants was handled with care, kept private, and protected in a locked room at the Historical Trauma and Transformation offices, while digital data was saved on a password-protected laptop is password-protected files (Buchanan & Zimmer, 2018). The data will only be used for this study and related outputs, such as research publications and nothing else (DoH, 2015). Should video recordings be used in documentary format after data collection, participants will be contacted to provide consent again for their footage to be used. The only individuals who had access to the data were my supervisors and I.

All the data were processed within participants' rights (e.g. treated with integrity, respect, protect their dignity) and in a manner that brings no harm to them (non-maleficence) (Buchanan & Zimmer, 2018). In terms of benefit in line with the guidelines set by The Department of Health (2015), participants were informed that the proposed research would not result in any direct benefits to participants, but that information from this study will help us to better understand how young people born after 1994 perceive and construct their social identity at HWIs, and will be published in peer-reviewed, accredited scientific journals. Participants were offered a mobile data voucher.

Participants were informed that although the interviews posed no physical harm, the nature of the research topic, and the fact that they will share personal experiences, could put them in a vulnerable position (DoH, 2015). For example, the interview might trigger previous traumatic experiences that could be harmful to their emotional well-being. Before the commencing of the interview, participants were informed that should they find any of the questions upsetting or have a need to discuss any of their experiences, they could be directed to the free counselling services at the Welgevallen Community Psychology Clinic located at Suidwal Street, Stellenbosch (tel.: 021 808 2696) or the Centre for Student Counselling & Development (021 808 4707, studysuccess@sun.ac.za). In addition, if participants had any questions or concerns about the research and their rights, they were informed to contact Ms.

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Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development

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CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Framing the Findings

The present research aimed to explore the experiences of self-identifying Coloured students and how they construct their identity regarding external identity markers at an HWI. More specifically, the study investigated whether and in what ways young self-identifying Coloured students assimilate or feel pressure to assimilate to what are considered to be white norms at an HWI concerning their external appearance. Furthermore, the study aimed to shed light on the potential factors influencing decisions to ascribe to or reject whiteness at Stellenbosch University (a.k.a. Maties, an HWI).

The data were collected through 10 recorded semi-structured, individual, mobile instant messaging interviews (MIMI) transcribed verbatim for thematic analysis. The interviews took an average time of 60 minutes, with the longest interview lasting 80 minutes and the shortest 60 minutes. The following section introduces each participant, their demographics, a description of their hair or hair journey, followed by an in-depth discussion of the themes and sub-themes that were created in the study.

4.2. Description of Participants

A total of ten participants volunteered to share their experiences by taking part in the research. Eight identified as female, while the other two participants identified as gender-neutral and gender fluid, respectively. Participant ages ranged from 21 to 25 years, with the most common age being 22 years old. Apart from one participant that was from the Eastern Cape, the other nine participants were all from the Western Cape. Two participants attended public high schools, while eight attended previous Model-C schools (historically white secondary schools). Participants also completed an identification measure adapted from Leach et al. (2008) (Appendix E), to assess the strength of their identification with being Coloured.

The level of identification was evaluated as follows; 1-1.4 *(Strongly do not Identify)*; 1.5-2.4 *(Does not Identify)*; 2.5-3.4 (*Neutral)*; 3.5-4.4 (*Strongly Identifies)*; 4.5-5 (*Very*

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Strongly Identifies). Although participants self-identified as a Coloured person (screening selection), their scores varied significantly on this scale, ranging from 2.9 to 4.6. The variation in these scores attests to the heterogeneous nature of the Coloured identity, described as ambiguous, impartial, discontinuous, and diverse in its oneness, and bound together by different forces (Adhikari, 2005; Brown, 2000; Erasmus, 2001; Richards, 2017).

All the participants met the requirements to take part in the study in that they all had a story about hair: they either (i) purposefully stopped altering the natural state of their hair or (ii) consciously changed the natural state of their hair while at Stellenbosch University. While participants presented with diverse hairstyles, it is interesting to note that everyone wore their hair natural, meaning that none of them had chemically straightened hair at the time of the interviews. None of the participants withdrew from the study, and everyone completed the full interview. Apart from one participant who preferred to use their name, all the other participants chose to provide pseudonyms to be used to write the research findings. Most of the participants were comfortable completing the study in English; however, one participant indicated that she would better express her views in Afrikaans. All the participants chose personal spaces like a bedroom or a study, to conduct the interviews, where they would not be interrupted.

The following is an alphabetic presentation and description of important characteristics of each participant with pseudonyms used to protect their identities.

Alice. Alice is a 25-year-old female, Master's student from Kuils River, doing a degree in Visual Arts. With a mean score of 2.9 on the Self-identification scale, Alice is neutral regarding identifying as a Coloured. She notes that if a different option were available, she would prefer to be classified as mixed-race rather than Coloured. Alice describes her hair as follows:

> *"This is the natural state of my hair right now. I don't have to do a lot of effort with it, like there is no like 10 products that I have to use to make it tame, like some people think they need to do to their hair. Uhm… What else did I want to say? When I was younger, though, I had like very tight curls, and people also liked them… Having*

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> *straight hair was already a thing in a Coloured school, like that's the 'better than natural hair and like long straight hair. I was always complimented for my long straight hair, like, "Alice, can I play with your hair?" that vibe… [laughs] And I was too nice to say no."*

Amber Gold. A 22-year-old from Cape Town, Amber Gold is a third-year BEd student specialising in the intermediate phase. Amber prefers to socialize in Malmesbury rather than Cape Town because it is where she gets her Coloured identity from, and it is shared and embraced by the community. With a mean score of 4.4 on the Self-identification scale, Amber identifies strongly with Coloured identity, and she describes her hair as follows:

> *"Well, it's dik, it's very, very thick, it is very thick but very soft. Everybody has this thing like, 'oh well jy het dik hare [you have thick hair]' And it's just like wires, no it's so soft like if I go and put my whole hand in now there [pointing to hair], there is going to be like a hand [an imprint], like a pillow. Like you put your hand therein, like look at that, it soema [just] just stays right there, soft."*

Bridget. Described by her friends as the mother of the friend group, Bridget is a 23-year-old female from Cape Town, doing a Master's degree in Psychology. With a mean score of 3.9 on the Self-identification scale, Bridget strongly identifies with Coloured identity. When describing her hair, she notes that she has:

> *"Low porosity hair, so that means [her] hair cuticles are closed and so [she] need to use heat in order to moisturize my hair… my hair is very dry. My curl pattern is a mixture of looser coarse and tighter coils, so it's like 3C4A [texture / curl type] pattern… I think when I have my afro, it's very liberating, I feel very free and good when I have it."*

Cornel West. Cornel West is a 24-year-old homosexual male from Eerste River who identifies as ontologically black, existentially queer, and spiritually Christian. With a mean score of 3.8 on the Self-identification scale, Cornel strongly identifies with Coloured identity. Currently, a Ph.D. candidate, the young theologian describes his hair as *kroes* (coarse), adding that it serves as a symbol of creolisation and evidence of other influences on his identity. He describes his hair as follows:

> *"I was once called kroes [coarse], and I think that's the best definition for my hair. It is kroes [coarse], it is a reflection of 360 years of colonialism and 48 years of apartheid, and it is the by-product of a rich depository of different cultural sources."*

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Katryntjie. A native of Stellenbosch, Idas Valley, Katryntjie is a 22-year-old final year B.A., Humanities student who regards her life as privileged. Katryntjie declined to complete the Self-identification scale because she does not feel that it is possible to quantify the extent to which one identifies with Coloured identity. She regards herself as being privileged because her parents own property and as a result of their wealth she attended previous-Model C schools (HWI's). Reflecting on her hair journey, Katryntjie describes her hair as follows:

> *"Still in the process of being where it's supposed to be or where I think it should go. But it's quiet, I'd say it's much healthier than it was back then, and I like my hair more now. And the nice thing about being on this hair journey is you don't just start liking your own hair, but you stop placing hair on a hierarchy of, "Okay, so the more dense…Or whatever coarse your hair is, the uglier your hair is… I don't know how to explain it, but it's a thing of you're not placing yourself somewhere because I used to say now… In my head, I used to place my hair here, and then I'd be like, 'Okay, so it's not as nice as the white peoples' hair, but it's also not as baaad."*

Kim. Originally from the Eastern Cape, Kim is a 25-year-old student completing her Master's degree in Research Psychology, and she also works part-time. Her work entails setting up programs in relation to training and raising awareness around sexual health, with a personal interest in gender and gender relations. With a mean score of 3.2 on the Self-identification scale, Kim is neutral in identifying with Coloured identity. When it comes to her hair, Kim states the following:

> *"I would describe my hair as kinky, coily, but most importantly beautiful. My natural hair, because again I think if I look back at home, just the way we were raised. I was never given the option to have natural hair, that was never even a discussion. You know, so from the beginning, my mother relaxed my hair when I was very young and she just always relaxed it. Uhm, to a point where I didn't know my hair without being straight. You know, and… Ja. So my Mom would call my hair, 'kroeskop, fudge kop, dik kop [kinky head, fudge head, thick head].'"*

Kimberley. Kimberley is a 21-year-old Psychology Honours student at Stellenbosch University, with her hopes set on getting into a clinical Master's Program in Psychology. Her interests are mental health, the community, and broader social issues. Kim did not feel comfortable completing the Self-identification scale. Kimberley describes her hair as follows:

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> "*I have type 3C4A [texture / curl type] hair and ja, my hair is curly in some parts, coiled in some parts, and I would describe my hair as healthy, because I put a lot of work into it, in the past like one and a half years maybe, two years I would say… Growing up in a Coloured household like I had to straighten my hair every week, Sunday nights consisted of me washing my hair, my mommy blowing my hair out and flat ironing it, because my hair had to be straight, because that was right and that was the way your hair was supposed to look."*

Lauren. Lauren is a 22-year-old third-year BEd student focusing on the intermediate phase and regards herself as a humble person, proudly representing her family and the George community. With a mean score of 4.6 on the Self-identification scale, Lauren identifies very strongly with Coloured identity. Preferring to do her interview in Afrikaans, she said the following about her hair:

> *"Dit, soos jy kan sien is, kyk soms voel dit glad, as ek iets aan smeer. As ek niks aan smeer nie, voel dit bietjie kroes. Maar my hare voel vol, dit voel leka, want dis lekker bouncy, soos as jy net, jy weet, dit voel soos n spons. veral soos nou, nou voel dit soos n spons, maar as dit nat is voel dit weer voel dit weer lekker sag en ja. Veral as dit so curls maak as dit nat is dan voel dit leka, maar andersins voel my hare nie te kroes nie, dit voel net reg, dit voel soos ek dit wil hê."*

Miguel. Miguel, whose preferred pronouns are they, them, and their, is the first in their family to study at Stellenbosch University. They are a determined 22-year-old gender-fluid student and social justice activist currently completing their third year BEd degree. Politics is second nature to them (pronoun), as they hold important portfolios on committees looking to bring about social change on campus. With a mean score of 3.9 on the Self-identification scale, Miguel strongly identifies with Coloured identity. They describe their hair as follows:

> *"So, I have very… I have curly, very coily kind of curl. If I have to speak about hair types, it's a very 3C [curl type/pattern] kind of hair type. It's not very tight so it can move, it does blow in the wind, it can pom-pom* [11] *[laughs] as you would say… [in the past] I gave into this thought of I need to have straight hair to be accepted into society, because that was basically the kind of view everyone had. Like if you had straight hair, you are seen as attractive, you will get the jobs, you will look more appealing. So, I thought, okay, but I need to straighten my hair out. So, I straightened my hair, and I thought this is what I really wanted, but as soon as I stepped into university, that's when I changed my hair."*

[11] *Pom pom* (making your hair into a bun) is often a sign that you have hair that is long enough the type/texture (e.g., straight) that can be made into a bun in Coloured communities. Thus, because your hair can be made into a bun, this is regarded as something to brag about and elevates your social status. It is desirable as it can indicate the extent to which hair can become straight, i.e., white.

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Samantha. Samantha is a 24-year-old female who grew up in the 'ghetto flats' in Paarl and preferred to be 'classified' as South African instead of a particular race/population group. After overcoming some difficulties, she is completing her final year studying Geology or Earth Sciences. With a mean score of 3.1 on the Self-identification scale, Samantha is neutral in identifying with Coloured identity. Samantha describes her hair as:

> *"My hair is thick and curly… [laughs] And wonderful. I love my hair. I think… it's so good to just have my hair the way it grows like out of my head, uhm, because previously it was like straightened. It was processed, and it was so hard to keep up with, and it wasn't good for my hair. My hair was in really bad shape. So, it just feels good to be me, that's why it's wonderful."*

4.3. Themes

I identified three themes and sub-themes out of the experiences of 10 self-identifying Coloured students and how they construct their identity regarding external identity markers at an HWI. The thematic analysis was grounded in phenomenology as a framework to interpret the meaning and significance of participant experiences. The themes and sub-themes that were created from this analysis are framed and influenced by the perspectives, worldviews, and literature consumed by me (see Table 1). The analysis, therefore, highlights the importance of the researcher in the thematic process and does not assume that the data alone produced the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Table 1

Summary of Themes and Subthemes from the Qualitative Thematic Analysis

Theme	**Subtheme**
4.3.1 Existing in a predominantly white space	4.3.1.1 Why we chose to study at Stellenbosch University 4.3.1.2 Orientating to whiteness
4.3.2 Hairarchy	4.3.2.1 Hair and colour(ism) in relation to identity 4.3.2.2 Conditions of worth become internalised values 4.3.2.3 Hairstory, memory, and the transfer of trauma
4.3.3 Transition into true self	4.3.3.1 The meaning of a new you in the journey of going natural 4.3.3.2 Going natural as an affirmation of the self

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4.3.1 Existing in a predominantly white space

Existing in a space where whiteness is the dominant culture asks of Coloured participants to acculturate. Acculturation refers to the strategies that participants need to adopt when interacting with others from different cultural contexts at Stellenbosch university (Berry, 2005). Members of the minority groups (i.e., Coloured students) relate to themselves and others through negotiation to avoid conflict. Minority groups negotiate either through integration (simultaneously maintaining their own cultural identity while participating in the host culture), separation (maintaining their own cultural identity), assimilation (rejecting their own cultural identity and becoming absorbed into the dominant/host culture), and alternation (alternating between the dominant and own culture based on social cues) (Berry, 2005; Du Bois, 1903; Fanon, 1970; Miller et al., 2013).

Being or becoming aware of the culture at Stellenbosch University (a.k.a. Maties) requires participants to apply strategies like assimilation to exist within the predominantly white space. An array of factors often influences these strategies. This first theme deals primarily with the motivations and the narratives behind why self-identifying Coloured people choose to study at an HWI and what they must do to exist in it. The theme also reflects on the experiences of the cultural and systemic makeup of the institution.

4.3.1.1 Why we chose to study at Stellenbosch. Access to educational institutions that were only reserved for white people is a significant prospect for people of colour (Wa Azania, 2020). For the present participants, the motivation to attend Stellenbosch University varied greatly from person to person. Motivations ranged from resources, financial aid, a sense of community, and the institutions' high academic standards. Some chose Stellenbosch University because of the smaller classes and rich resources that would allow them to perform better academically. However, most participants agreed that they chose the University because of its resources and academic standards, which they want to be associated with. For example:

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> *"I like the fact that [at] this University… People with money put money into this University, and just like if you look at like the level of resources that we have here. Like the computer labs, for example, the library, like the resources at the University, it's plentiful and if I like compare it to UWC, for example. Like I spent a few days like with friends we would go to UWC just to like to spend the day there and study in their library and it was very different from the Stellenbosch one and even like the computer labs there…this institution has a lot of money and we should be grateful for all the resources that they give us here."- Kimberley, 21*

Participants' motivations to study at Stellenbosch University may be rooted in the dilemma that HBUs still face post-apartheid, in that they are aware of the lack of resources and funding opportunities that HBUs still experience (Ilorah, 2006). There is a belief that Stellenbosch University seems to provide a level of privilege that is thus birthed out of the realization of continued systemic injustices at HBUs, and a fear that it could affect their academic development. In addition, motivations to study at an HWI could also be attributed to social whitening (Viveros Vigoya, 2015). This construct can be described as an "escape from what [is a] lack in order to ensure for oneself a better form of social existence in a context that values what is white as a synonym for progress, civilization" (Viveros Vigoya, 2015, p. 497). Wade (1997) argues that social whitening happens in various ways, but the most applicable to why participants choose HWIs can be described as gaining access to networks previously unavailable to people of colour. Thus, participants' perceptions of Stellenbosch University are that the institution affords Coloured students' academic esteem, productive environments, and privileges, the kind their white counterparts have enjoyed historically (Wa Azania, 2020).

However, for participants like Alice, although she likes the environment and the support structures that Stellenbosch University provides, her motivation to attend an HWI stems from an awareness of people's perceptions of HBU. Post-apartheid, Coloured identity is still tainted with many racial stereotypes, as during colonialism and apartheid (Adhikari, 2005; Erasmus, 2001). Therefore, Alice's decision, like Amber's, to study at Stellenbosch University over HBUs (e.g., the University of the Western Cape), is a conscious one, in that she may not want to be associated with the perceived racial stereotypes and stigma related to those institutions and the people that study there. They report that:

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> *"There is a stigma with UWC like it's a coloured place, it's for coloured people. And I think I didn't want to be associated with that, because ja, it's like the stereotypical association that all the stereotypes I told you about, but also like… No that's the same. Okay, not going to say that. So ja, the stereotypes and maybe of the calibre, I feel like Stellenbosch is at a higher calibre than most of the other Universities. I'm more like into nature and Stellenbosch offers that a little bit more."- Alice, 25*
> *"Oh, I didn't apply to UWC, because I feel like it's too cliché for coloured people, too many coloured people… I'm sorry, I didn't mean it in a bad way. I just mean like I feel like people just assume because I'm coloured, I wish to go to UWC or CPUT," – Amber Gold, 22*

As reported by these participants, there is a need amongst Coloured students not to be associated with HBU out of fear to confirm perceived negative stereotypes. These negative stereotypes and derogatory connotations associated with Coloured identity could arise out of the essentialist and instrumentalist constructions of the identity during periods in which the identity was constructed as less than, residual, illegitimate, barbaric, or immoral (Adhikari, 2006; Erasmus, 2001; Holtzman, 2018). These constructions often create what Wicomb (1998) calls an internalised sense of shame, rooted in Coloured people's history of creolization and a desire not to be black (regarded as less than human during apartheid). Coloured participants may therefore disavow their proximity to blackness and Colouredness (Jacobs, 2008), consciously choosing an institution that is closer to whiteness because of two reasons. Firstly, because they do not want to be associated with sub-par institutions and be regarded as such by others, they do not want to be associated with the "type of Coloured person" who attends HBUs.

Some students also experience cognitive dissonance in their relationship with Stellenbosch University due to their sense of belonging in HWIs. For participants, the HWI is a place where they can belong but where they are also alienated. Though Cornel, he finds the space racially hostile, yet as a gay person of colour, he also finds a sense of belonging in this space. Although it might be difficult to exist at SU as a Coloured person, students like Cornel might find belonging in the openly gay community that Stellenbosch University provides.

For others, the decision to go to a HWU was the logical next step because they come from previous Model-C schools (primary or secondary) and feel comfortable being in white spaces. This sense of belonging could thus be associated with the level of whiteness

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experienced that they might have grown accustomed to. In a sense, participants could now be considered as passing for white, as the whiteness they have already obtained provides upward social mobility that gives access to community. Cornel and Alice state that:

> *"What I love about Stellenbosch is the sense of community, which is weird because that community that I speak of is in opposition to the imperious white supremacist capitalist patriarchy that is present there. It's a network, a solidarity network of people who are intentional about their critique of the system… sense of belonging is what Stellenbosch has afforded me and I say this intentionally, you know, not only as a person of colour, a coloured person, I say this as a queer-identified black person. So, I say this as a gay man. In a very interesting way, Stellenbosch afforded me the opportunity to exist as a queer person without as many limitations as I do when I am not in Stellenbosch. That sense of community is what I love"- Cornel, 24*

> *"I can't speak for other people, but I can speak for myself. When I was at school, it was definitely assimilation like… I went to a private High School, I mean. I went to a private school, I came from a coloured Primary School, so all I knew was coloured. Well, I mean in general… So I definitely assimilated, especially in Grade 8 like wow. I took a turn, like my identity took a big turn, but then once I started like University, like 2017. Like I just had my own vibe, and I guess that wasn't, it's just not a conventional vibe in a sense... I've assimilated, but I have assimilated since High School, so it's not like a different… It's become more my identity than something that I do to cope with being coloured… It's become more my identity to be assimilated within other cultures, like a hybrid vibe, I can relate to a lot of different people and it's not just because I want to fit in, it's more just like there are like little fragments of me." – Alice, 25*

The predisposed social whitening through education institutions provided these participants with a new class experience that could have made the move to, or the desire to be at a HWU a logical one (Wa Azania, 2020). Participants possibly inhabit a new class formed by the type and quantity of cultural capital and the trajectory of (upward, downward, or stable) social mobility it has historically provided (Power, 1999, p. 50). The memory of what it is like, how to behave, and what it means to be in an HWI is referred to as the embodied state of cultural capitalism (Bourdieu, 1986). Thus, it could be argued that participants found it easier to associate with Stellenbosch University and to exist within this white space as it brings a sense of comfort and familiarity, based on capital already acquired that put them in a particular class. This attitude toward being in a space where assimilation could be enforced thus provides a sense of belonging as participants already have the capital to conform and belong to the class created by whiteness at Stellenbosch University.

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4.3.1.2 Orientating to whiteness at Stellenbosch University. Being a student at Stellenbosch University (also described as a Matie) is a new identity that participants ought to adopt. For Coloured participants, becoming a Matie might be closely linked to changing or adapting, thus acculturate. A part of becoming a Matie could thus be seen as feeling pressure to conform to the expectations of whiteness (Barroso, 2015; Moodley, 2013) while not having enough social capital of their own to influence whiteness (Wa Azania, 2020). Because the University essentially remains white in appearance (i.e., the majority of the student body is white), whiteness continues to permeate its institutional culture, the environment asks Coloured students to orient themselves with whiteness and even assimilate (Barroso, 2015; Bazana & Mogotsi, 2017; Pattman, 2007).

Samantha mentions that "*the things we do, it's quite white I think… Certain activities are definitely more common in the white community than any other community."* Although assimilation is not forced onto any individual, RES(idence) and institutional culture often create an atmosphere where students of colour may feel pressure to submit to the dominance of whiteness, lessen their degree of Colouredness, or feel left out. Barroso (2015) argues that the culture and identity of the HWI reproduce discourses of inferiority while fostering whiteness and devaluing Colouredness and blackness. As described by Bridget, the language or the way things are done in residences are often in a white Afrikaner manner, and as a result, Coloured students are often left to find other means to cope or integrate, e.g., to submit. Bridget describes her RES experience as follows:

> *"If you think of the language that's predominantly spoken, it's Afrikaans… Then also, the RES is culture, uhm a lot of what you do is based on what people have done in previous years so like the 'sokkieing,' the 'skakeling' even the language that they use within RES is Afrikaans predominantly. And yeah, if you wanna change the language people get, Afrikaans people get really upset. I remember in the beginning stages of that language policy people got really upset about Afrikaans kind of being used less in like official communication because, they felt that Stellenbosch is Afrikaans, so why are you taking the Afrikaans away?"- Bridget, 23*

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Most participants agreed that it was at social events like *Skakels*, *JOOL*[12], *Vensters*, and Sêr where they felt confronted with being different. Participants felt othered, exposed, or unprotected at social events if they did not look, speak, or behave a certain way (e.g., white). These events or cultural practices alienated and made participants aware of what they are not. The institutional culture seems to create the "ideal white" and the "ideal Coloured"; which is the one that acts white (Barroso, 2015; Bazana & Mogotsi, 2017). The white standard is unspoken but nevertheless appears to be an essential part of becoming and feeling accepted as a student at Stellenbosch University. Bridget recalls, for example:

> *"So, for me that was I think I was my eyes were open to how people can judge you based on how you look because I... I wasn't really aware of racism before coming to Stellenbosch, but once you come to Stellenbosch, you're so hyper-aware of it. And even in the socials that we had with men's-resses the guys would always go for the white girls and like you as a person of colour would be left hoping that someone would come and talk to you or choose you and even [laughs]… Another one in welcoming week um, the guys had to like say goodbye, but they knelt down before you and they sang to you. And so, I was just standing there and like no one wanted to...like they're all going for the white girls obviously."* - *Bridget, 23*

Researchers on social identity formation in WHIs note that the activities done in residences and curricula taught culturally alienate outsiders (Bazana & Mogotsi, 2017; Mnguni, 2016; Steyn et al., 2014). The events instituted to celebrate the institutional culture and make students feel at home and included are, paradoxically, those that result in students of colour feeling othered. The process of othering that Coloured students experience appears to be induced in that they are made aware of the differences in their own culture and identity, which does not fit into the host culture or norms (Staszak, 2009). Othering potentially creates ingroups (us, a Matie, white people or whiteness) and outgroups (them, Coloured people or Colouredness), with negative characteristics attributed to individuals in outgroups that distinguish them from the perceived normative social ingroup (Moodley, 2013; Staszak, 2009). Through this process of othering, participants appear to become more alienated and excluded from the dominant culture in the HWI (Bazana & Mogotsi, 2017; Phoenix, 2009).

[12] JOOL is a social event for students from different residences that happen during *Vensters*.

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In addition to feeling othered, orienting to whiteness often asks Coloured students to utilize coping mechanisms or adaptation strategies to enable them to navigate spaces and situations at HWIs. Such strategies may include what Fanon (1970) refers to as mimicry and Molinsky (2007) as "cross-cultural code-switching." Mimicry and cross-cultural code-switching here refers to Coloured students alternating their behaviour between their own culture and those considered appropriate at the host institution, in that it accommodates whiteness (Barroso, 2015; Fanon, 1970). Mimicry is thus a visible action, though Fanon argues that it happens at a subconscious level, born out of an inferiority complex and the desire to be white. However, when the present participants engaged in mimicry, they often decided to do this to survive or be accepted by the system. This behaviour could thus serve as a coping strategy. Participants' coping/adaptation strategies varied significantly, but in general, were aimed at meeting white people at their level by doing what they do. In the words of Samantha: "*We kind of have to play their game,"* which indicates how coping mechanisms could be seen as a survival strategy to fit in and be regarded as "one of them.*"*

Some participants would change their accents, speak Afrikaans, group together, not talk at all, or have selective word use. In essence, it seems that they policed their behaviour to lessen their Coloured identity. Other participants further supported the notion of adaptation as a means to be taken seriously or even sound intelligent. This need to adapt is essentially described as alternation, when individuals from minority cultures alternate their behaviour, through mimicry and cross-cultural code-switching, based on how it fits local social cues at the HWI. Alternation is characterised by individuals changing their language preference (from Afrikaans to English or pure Afrikaans), attitudes, values, and mannerisms to fit that of the dominant culture or what they perceive their white counterparts would like them to do (Fanon, 1970; Molinsky, 2007). Participants thus appear to alternate through code-switching, such as from *Kaaps* to Afrikaans, because they possess knowledge of their own culture and that of the dominant group. Continual alternation could thus result in lactification (whitening of the

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conscious), in that Coloured participants could become prone to white expectations, which, in turn, might lead to the Coloured identity approximating whiteness (Du Bois, 1903; Fanon, 1970).

The perceived need to alternate is also closely tied to the negative perceptions that Coloured people believe others have about them ("the guise of the white man") and the need to refute these (Fanon, 1970, p. 154). Participants describe these perceptions as including narrowly defined stereotypes, for example being loud, unintelligent, or speaking gangster, that many people have, but in this case, particularly white people. For some participants, adapting or conforming could be regarded as an attempt not to disturb the "white system," in a way, assimilating or alternating out of fear. Lauren and Kimberley describe their adaptation strategies as follows:

> *"Ek het al baie kere dit beleef. Soos even by skakels soos ek dit genoem het, by skakels en soos by meetings waar wanneer ek miskien, 'n vraag vra tydens die meeting of so, dan sal ek mooier Afrikaans wil praat sodat ek nie so hoef te brei nie, soos ek nou praat nie. Ja want gewoonlik as ek praat, soos ek se 'djy' en 'djou' en so, terwyl ander soos 'jy' en 'jou' en dan sal ek altyd so praat soos 'jy' en 'julle' net om my aksent te verander, net om te wil in te pas by hulle [wit mense]. En ek sal my houding of die manier hoe ek dinge doen ook soms verander net om in te pas." – Lauren, 22*

> *"There are like small changes in your behaviour and like how you conduct yourself. Sometimes you maybe try to speak better English, or you try to improve your grammar a bit while speaking, because you are so aware of how everyone else might perceive you and you don't want to confirm stereotypes they might have in their head about coloured people. So you kind of like limit yourself in those situations… like may be working with a lab partner who is someone outside of my race or white for example. Then I would just change the way I think to maybe appear more intelligent than I am, because of a stereotype may be that people have that coloured maybe… Just because I was so aware of like coloured stereotypes and me not wanting to confirm it basically"- Kimberley, 21*

Responses such as those of Samantha, Kimberley, and Lauren indicate rejection anxiety (Moodley, 2013; Mynhardt et al., 2007). Moodley (2013) states that being accepted or gaining approval is important for students of colour because the feeling of not being accepted, or lack of belonging, could be significant in terms of how people of colour define their own social identity. Failing to meet the standard of whiteness, for example, using the correct Afrikaans accent, could have made the colour difference visible, thereby othering them

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(Moodley, 2013). Acceptance and approval become important because, according to Fanon, interaction with the white world prevents the Coloured person from behaving as they normally would and that "the goal of [their] behaviour will be [t]he [o]ther (in the guise of the white man), for the other alone can give him worth. That is on the ethical level: self-esteem" (Fanon, 1970, p. 154; Fanon & Haddour, 2006). Coloured students appear to essentially look at themselves through the lens of whiteness, seemingly trying to adapt to the HWI's culture by not being too Coloured to gain acceptance and worth in the eyes of whiteness.

This rejection anxiety could thus highlight how Colouredness is not acknowledged at Stellenbosch University and the sense of continuous work that participants tend to do, in order to be found equal or deserving. In addition, this lack of acknowledgment could leave participants feeling unworthy, questioning who and what they are. The need to be regarded as equal or deserving while doubting the self is what Du Bois (1903) calls double consciousness (Barroso, 2015; Du Bois, 1903). Navigating the white space seems to become an internal struggle with tensions of dual existence between keeping your Coloured identity (maintaining culture) and adapting to whiteness (assimilate or alternate to university culture) (Berry, 2005; Du Bois, 1903; Fanon, 1970; Hook, 2004; Leonardo, 2002). The Coloured existence at HWIs appears to be associated with the need to defend and assert their otherness while being immersed in whiteness. The following records the effort Coloured students ought to do, and the emotions associated with it:

> *"And then you come to a space like this, like Stellenbosch and you start to realise how different you are and also you start to realise how you feel like your people are not celebrated or seen in a more positive light. Do you know what I mean? So that's like this sort of… So now I'm caused on double consciousness, so this idea of you having to fit into a space and for the longest time, what I've struggled with and you even have to think about back at home and High School, I've always tried to dim down on how my coloured identity, because it's not approved in these spaces"- Kim, 25*

The orientation to whiteness appears to come with a fear of being rejected and the realisation that approximating to whiteness is needed for participants to exist. This is not necessarily a new fear for many, but it is a different kind of fear because it is Stellenbosch

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University. Thus, the need to exist and operate within the space could result in an internal struggle of being a Coloured at an HWI and being aware that one's Colouredness may need to be suppressed to be regarded as the "ideal Coloured" for the space.

4.3.2 Hairarchy

Coined from the present research data, "hairarchy" is a term made up from the words hair and hierarchy and refers to a hierarchy of social stratification based on hair within an existing social hierarchy. Hairarchy is thus a specific kind of hierarchy that affords social status to a person of colour based on their hair. It could be said that hairarchy serves the same function in democracy as the pencil test did during apartheid (Erasmus, 2000; Posel, 2011). However, where the pencil test was based on pseudo-biology to establish race, the hairarchy uses external markers (i.e., hair and skin tone) to establish the stratification within identities of colour based on norms of whiteness or processes of social whitening (Mokoena, 2017; Thompson, 2009). The hairarchy, therefore, has conditions (straight hair) that ought to be met to assign value to an individual allowing people to buy out of a social experience. These values are often internalised and give meaning to how hair informs the performance of identity.

4.3.2.1 Hair and colour(ism) in relation to identity. Participants report that their current experiences of the construct of colourism and the prejudice of hair could be informed by past connotations of Coloured identity. The historical meanings assigned to hair and skin tone highlight how people of colour were not just placed on a racial hierarchy, but how social status and worth within this hierarchy was assigned to them based on their complexion, hairstyle, type, or texture of hair (Posel, 2011; Thompson, 2009). Thus, because both hair and colourism affect a particular community (Coloured people) in a particular way, one needs to consider the racist social hierarchy of South African society. Apartheid-informed whiteness gave hair a colour because only people of colour's hair were policed and worth assigned to it.

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When Miguel was asked why the value was placed on certain hair as it does currently, they reported the following:

> *"Because of Apartheid, we had this hierarchy of whites overpowering people of colour, so specifically when it came to like slavery, people had to have like different hairstyles to actually speak to them in a way. Like people had to plait their hair or people had to do something about their hair, because it was always a problem for people to have like a bunch of… To have big hair, and even when it comes to jobs back in the day, like you could never get a job if your hair was big or curly. So you always had to have like straight hair." –Miguel, 22*

Participants' experience can be equated to the value hair has and the value it gives to past definitions thereof. In particular, evaluations of hair and skin tone of people of colour during white oppression in South Africa determined how hair was used to dictate identity and social mobility. Similarly, Powe (2009) argues that hairstyle, whether in apartheid, slavery, or democracy, is a sign that conveys information about who Coloured people are and what they can access in a white supremacist hierarchy. The experience of what hair communicates about Coloured people can often still interpreted within the parameters of how the instrumentalists and essentialists constructed the identity, in that it is residual, less than, but could be white or pass-white through appropriating whiteness (Adhikari, 2004, 2005; Erasmus, 2001).

For participants, hair and colourism does not only seem to play an important role in Coloured communities but also in the way Colouredness is expressed at an HWU. Whiteness appears to inform external markers of identity to the extent that for participants, the whiter you look at Stellenbosch University, the more aesthetically pleasing or desirable you can become as a Coloured person. The whiter you can look also produces a level of privilege or status, what Barroso (2015) calls the "ideal white" person. For example, Cornel notes the following:

> *"So, I think that the two for me, colourism and hair textures, at least when it's in a coloured community, the two go together…This is I think very subjective and probably a Cape Coloured phenomenon but the lighter one is the one that is more appreciated and the texture… I don't know, you know there's grading for textures of hair which I have never been interested in, but the more styl [straight] your hair is, the more aesthetically pleasing you become to society… I think colourism is definitely a thing at Stellenbosch. Not just colourism but the hair texture becomes part of that thing, because I think colourism and hair texture goes hand-in-hand. So I think it would*

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> *affect… I think if I were lighter, I would be treated better and if I were darker I'd be treated worse" – Cornel, 24*

Participants' experiences about hair and skin complexion are that these could only become pleasing or acceptable at Stellenbosch University if they measure up to whiteness. Coarse hair and darker skin equals black, whereas straight hair and lighter complexion equals white (Erasmus, 1997, 2000; Powe, 2009). Hence, a lighter skin tone with a straighter type or hair texture may give you favour that could be equated to a level of whiteness at Stellenbosch University. For Fanon (1970), this level of whiteness is an unattainable, pathologic pursuit, but is engaged in through the process of lactification, or what Viveros Vigoya (2015) calls social whitening, which leads to assimilation. Participants could thus become the "ideal Coloured", by looking whiter, i.e., straight hair, lighter complexion, to have a better social experience.

The pathologic pursuit to attain levels of whiteness seems to have negative effects on Coloured people's identity that creates contention within the self. By engaging in hair straightening practices, people of colour affirm the supposed external standards of whiteness and at the same time could become estranged and alienated from their sense of self, their own body, and eventually their humanity, denying their blackness/ Colouredness. For participants, how good or accepting you look, in turn, can become a measurement of worth and acceptance at Stellenbosch University. Though participants are aware of how aesthetically pleasing they could become by conforming to white beauty standards and measures of being, they also know it is a gateway to approval, less scrutiny, and being regarded as valid. In addition, participants are aware of how the representation of Colouredness through hair is not acceptable or valued in the same way. Kim describes her experience of hair as follows:

> *"Uhm, hair is so important, so if you have nice gladde [straight] hair, "Oh my word, you're so pretty…" You know, that's the standard, you know which is very close to whiteness again, because you fudge kop[head]…Oooh so close to black… Oh no, we don't want that." You know, so I think the case is that internalized struggle and dichotomy of being… Of not wanting to be black and wanting to be white but you never will be, but you will still strive towards it. Uhm, and I think that's why I had to… They were the struggle, because they… Ja, my Mom would say stuff like, what was her*

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> *initial reaction was, 'How are you going to get a job? How are people going to take you seriously with a kroeskop?' And I'm like, '… What does my hair have to do with it… I mean my hair is an expression of who I am, you know, so you basically telling me, 'Nee girl, relax the hair [No girl, straighten that hair]… And again, don't express who you are, who you naturally are to be taken seriously in this space [HWI]."* -Kim, *25*

Coloured participants may look at the correlation between their hair and skin colour "through the eyes of others" (Du Bois, 1903, p. 15). It becomes problematic for participants to express their Coloured-self or be taken seriously in a social context if they do not bring their hair to the white standard. Coloured participants must internalise both value systems of what it means to Coloured and what it means to be white to determine the extent they have to alternate or assimilate. As a result of having to manage both value systems, the identity of the Coloured student could therefore be split or disrupted in a predominantly white space that views Colouredness as less than whiteness (Du Bois, 1903; Molinsky, 2007). This split, also referred to as double consciousness, is the experience of dichotomy in the struggle to reconcile both identities (Du Bois, 1903; Fanon, 1970). The double consciousness seemingly creates anxiety in the process of identity formation resulting in the conflict between the Coloured person they are and who they ought to be at Stellenbosch University. That is to say, who the Coloured person is concerning appearance in terms of hair and skin colour, and the ideal Coloured person they must become; ascribing to the standard that values whiteness through straight hair and a lighter skin tone that have to obtained to be regarded worthy.

It is essential to observe that for participants, the need to assimilate into whiteness when it comes to hair or skin colour may often be fostered by members of the Coloured community, particularly the socialisation agents that identify as female (e.g., mothers and grandmothers). In essence, it could be regarded as the inheritance of how hair is socialized in ways to give it meaning, and skin complexion could be appropriated for social mobility. Lesane-Brown (2006) defines racial socialization as specific verbal and non-verbal messages transferred from older to younger generations regarding group and personal identity. Dove (2021) highlights that these messages include beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviours about

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the meaning and significance of social identity construct. How participants do their hair and what skin tone is preferred appears to be taught to them by members of their family and their communities. Kim describes this normative standard through socialisation as follows:

> *"So my Ouma would say stuff like that, you know, "Oh jy's so mooi, so lig van kleur my kind…" Like you're so light-skinned my child, you're so pretty. Also, another thing, my Ouma would… And even a lot of other coloured people when you speak to them, older coloured people especially, when they talk about their forefathers, it's always, "No, my forefathers were from Germany…" And they like really want to be connected to these white people, you know… Pre-colonial times already, you know, how whiteness has been sort of the norm, and ja… And ja, that's why in my experience with coloured people in my family, no one talks about being closely related to black people."- Kim, 25*

Cooley (1902) defines socialization as the process through which the individual develops the self by learning norms and knowing about themselves from others. During the process, the individual inherits and disseminates customs, norms, and ideologies while obtaining the skills and habits necessary to navigate their society. During this lifelong process of learning behavioural norms, the process is aided by different agents responsible for the individual's socialization. The nuclear family, or those who assume a parental role, is regarded as the most important agent of socialisation in that they teach the individual how to function and care for themselves.

Apart from the socialization of doing their hair, facilitated by the women in their life and their community, participants do not appear to know a different way to manage their hair. Within Coloured communities, good or acceptable hair meant straight/sleek hair and was valued as a feature along with other aesthetics (Erasmus, 1997). Good hair is straight and regarded as a reactionary practice aspiring to whiteness within the community where membership could be tied to assimilation. Assimilation could thus become second nature as parents and communities socialize what is valued and normative regarding hair, skin colour, and status in society, especially one that values whiteness. The question then remains, who or what influenced parents in the Coloured community concerning their hair, hairstyling, or convictions.

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4.3.2.2 C**onditions of worth become internalised values.** As previously discussed, the part that apartheid has played in identity construction remains critical to participants' experience. The apartheid context is thus relevant in how worth is determined, especially in how those social conditions can shape a generation's value system and how that system could be transferred to those born post-apartheid (Duncan, 2002). For participants, their worth as a Coloured person and a marginalised minority can almost increase and decrease based on the right skin colour and hair texture due to older generations' value placed on these markers. These conditions, informed by the past, could be internalised and enforced by older group members to measure value. Indeed, the margin by which one can become whiter through external markers is the same margin by which your worth becomes more apparent. For example:

> *"Again, I think that they [older people] … They've been conditioned and socialized to think a certain way about ourselves and who we need to be as coloured people. And for some odd reason, hair is so important when it comes to… I mean to coloured people that I know, you know. Uhm, hair is so important, so if you have nice gladde hair…Oh my word, you're so pretty…You know, that's the standard, you know which is very close to whiteness again, because you fudge kop, "Oooh so close to black… Oh no, we don't want that." You know, so I think the case is that internalized struggle and dichotomy of being… I mean in a society where a certain thing is approved, if you can modify your hair and it's certainly approved and affirmed. If you can modify your hair to look similar to the way in which something is approved, you end up doing it. Ja, so I think it could be by choice, but from my experience again. It's the full of, 'This is pretty… The straight hair is pretty.' You know, our length is also important hey. Again, I think it's important, because there's this thing my Ouma them, like black people's hair don't really grow and now as daar nou lengte… If your hair is long, you know, you know having long straight hair is just… Again, I think close to whiteness, but no one, sometimes we don't think like that, but ja." – Kim, 25*

How the meaning of hair is constructed, and experienced could move from physical trauma (apartheid) to cultural trauma (democracy) as Coloured participants experience trauma as a cultural process mediated through collective memory and identity (Mbatha, 2017). The trauma experienced by generations before (physical conditions of worth) is reproduced in socialisation processes (measures of worth) fostered by older generations like grandparents, which connects the past to the present through representation and imagination (Eyerman, 2001; Gobodo-Madikizela & Van der Merwe, 2009; Mbatha, 2017). Therefore, the

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internalisation of whiteness to improve social mobility can be problematic in that it could transfer secondary trauma as normative through culture, influenced by socio-historic standards of being. The experience of whiteness and the appropriation thereof as the standard experienced in the present is an experience heavily influenced by the past.

The socialisation of Coloured women that could internalize values of whiteness and transfer trauma to those they socialise tend to be facilitated through different straightening rituals/cultural practices that participants use to get their hair in an acceptable state. Female social agents predominantly enable these processes in their families. These hair rituals/practices have become more modern and include a "Brazilian"[13], chemical relaxer, GHD (flat iron), swirl[14] and going to the hair salon regularly. The process of getting their hair done was initially started by the mother figure(s). Thus, what was known about hair and its management was conveyed to participants by their mothers and others alike in the community. Describing these hair rituals, which create attachments and transfer knowledge from the older to the younger generation, also came naturally to participants because it started at a very young age. For example, Samantha states that

> *"But even though like during the process of doing all of that, it wasn't nice, it actually hurt at some stage and my mom, and my grandmother would say, I think, "suffer for beauty" or whatever. Uhm, ja, and so throughout my childhood, like my hair was done and uhm ja. When I was younger it was like longer, but like… past my shoulders, like way past my shoulders, but like as I grew up it started… just slowing down, it seemed like it wasn't growing. So, I just accepted it and just went on, when the flat iron came out, like we did the flat iron as well which then… Ja"* - Samantha, 24

Various authors argue that different communities have different hair rituals. These rituals inform identity and are used as a tool to create social cohesion communities (Majali et al., 2017; Posel, 2011; Thompson, 2009). Samantha remarked that a saying in Coloured communities goes, "you must suffer for beauty," but no one speaks about "the suffering caused by beauty." The process of straightening hair induces suffering. Suffering that participants' female relatives already could have experienced, and though they might be

[13] Semi-permanent hair straightening method done by temporarily sealing a liquid keratin solution into the hair.
[14] The process where the hair is swirled/combed to one side. A nylon stocking (a.k.a swirl-kous) is then placed on the head to keep the swirl in place.

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aware of the suffering caused, they still transfer it. The suffering could be regarded as something to strive for, although it results in unhealthy hair that stops growing. Erasmus (1997) recalls that this pain was often double layered, in that if Coloured women could not endure the pain of doing your hair, they ought to endure the pain caused by being rejected by the opposite sex. The process of straightening hair can thus be interpreted as two-fold, an attempt to protect against the trauma of rejection suffered by parents and indirectly placing the children, the participants in this case, through trauma themselves.

Participants observed, however, that even when the ideal of straight hair was obtained through hair practices and rituals, hot or moist air would always remind them of who they were and what they cannot be. When their hair would *gerr*, *frizz* or *mins* [15]because of exposure to moisture, in a sense, it would expose them for who they or their hair are by bringing the straightened hair back to its natural state. Samantha recalls:

> *"So our hair is textured, and when it comes into like humid climate or rainy weather, and it gets water, it kind of wants to revert to its textured shape. So it goes from being flat and straightened to wanting to go 'poof'... At that point in my life, I just thought it's something that I needed to avoid happening. I'd never thought that, okay this is what happens, so I need to do things differently so that it doesn't happen... I just thought, okay, let's just stop that from happening, like stop making it gerr. So that it just can stay, like stay flat and stay like straight. So I never thought that maybe I should change my hair so that when it gerrs, it doesn't look bad. I never thought that way.... Ja, mostly people ja. Ja, because we get the idea that it doesn't look nice, so we don't want to not look nice, the people [are] going to say something. - Samantha, 24*

The phenomena of *gerr*, *frizz* or *mins* happens when the hair was straightened through blow-drying (heat treatment) and is exposed to moisture, best described by the title of Erasmus's (1997) article, "*Oe, my hare gaan huistoe*" [Oh, my hair is going home]. The moisture thus essentially reveals the hair for what it is not, forcing it to return to its natural state, or home. Hair going back to where it comes from reveals the real identity of those who straightened their hair. Hence, if the straightening of hair could be a form of assimilation into

[15] *Mins*, also spelled mince, is a process that happens when heat-treated hair gets water, which reverts the hair to its textured shape, making the hair static, very thick, and difficult to work with. Hair goes from being flat and straightened to wanting to go "poof." Based on region, *mins* is also referred to as *gerr, frizz, or bom,* a phenomenon that no one wants to happen to them because it is associated with shame.

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whiteness, for participants, the experience of hair being able to mince is layered with anxiety out of fear associated with the return to what the Coloured-self could naturally be.

Hair and styling can symbolize a type of submission to or the internalisation of structures of power that legitimise hierarchies (Bourdieu, 2001). However, legitimising the hairarchy often asks for the complicity of the social agent, doing their hair a particular way, which results in self-blame (Mbatha, 2017). The process of going natural [16](more on this under *'Transition into the True Self'*) could also expose participants to the violence of the self through new stratifications in the hair communities (both those that straighten and wear it natural). There appears to be new levels or standards of hair in the hairarchy. When a person goes natural or have natural hair, there seems to be a preferred curl type, thus, creating another stratification in an existing hierarchy. Mbatha (2017) suggests that the Coloured student becomes a complicit perpetrator of violence against the Coloured body. This violence against the self is captured in Kim's case:

> *"But I mean, you know what? Even in the natural hair community, I feel even among coloured girls, the coloured girls who have natural hair, but it's very… Those… It's not… This kroeserage [coarse] natural hair, I don't know how to explain it. It's like very curly, soft, natural hair, you know. And even in the community, I feel like there is some form of… There's still that thing man, you know… Oh ja…. There's still that thing of I think some form of hierarchy, you know... oh we are so liberated, ons se hare is weer kroes en natural [our hair is coarse again and natural], but in that community, I feel like my hair… So I'm like in the middle"* - Kim, 25

For participants, hair can be become a weapon that is used against their Coloured identity. Though participants experience freedom, they seem to commit new levels of violence through hair. Violence is still present as the victims (of whiteness) now appear to become perpetrators within the new hierarchy. Inferiority created by the internalization of whiteness uses elements thereof against the self (the Coloured identity or the person that identifies as such).

4.3.2.3 Hairstory, memory, and the transfer of trauma. There is a history of how Coloured people perform identity through external markers, and this history is often entangled

[16] Transitioning from straightened to natural hair, people of colour embrace their natural hair and stop altering its state with chemicals or other forms of straightener (Chutel, 2018; Erasmus, 1997; Thomas, 2019).

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with trauma (Erasmus, 2000, 2001; Posel, 2011). Cornel (24) states the following about being Coloured and hauntings of the past:

> *"In us, in our thinking, in our… I say in us because it is still generational trauma that still plays a role in how we perform our bodies, how we perform our identities. So, when I say given, the mind… that consciousness is a given, it's something raised, socialisation."*

The history of hair (i.e., the hairstory), how the meaning has been constructed, and reconstructed over time are influenced by several factors. The factors could impact hair for those who influenced participants are, when things happen (e.g., age and era) and gender (grandmothers and mothers). There tends to be an interplay between generations (time, place, and socialization agent) and how their perception of hair has been transferred (Lesane-Brown, 2006). Katryntjie describes the link between the effects of the past and identity expression as follows:

> *"Ooh jinne, that colourism is… It's so prevalent still, it's quite sad that it's still so so prevalent. I know like when I was little, some of my family members, my grandmother in particular, told me that I'm prettier than my cousins because I am lighter than them… Ja, and because I had… My hair was kind of straight at that time; I didn't even know that I had curly hair until two years ago when I actually started my curly hair journey, because I think I was 9 years old when they relaxed my hair the first time. Ja, so she liked the straight hair and when I go to her now and I'm like… Hi Ouma… and then she's like, 'oh my word, wat gaan aan met jou hare?... Kam [Comb] it, it is dan nou soe dik[it is so thick]'. Oh, and also the thing about it being thin, like you don't have a lot of hair, that was also a nice thing. And now she's like, "Yoh jou hare is nou dik…"- Katryntjie, 22*

Those in parenting roles facilitate the experience of making the past present, as they teach what acceptable or good hairstyles ought to be through hair practices. How socialisation agents socialise could be regarded as a response to trauma, transferring skills, culture, and the instructions of behaviour for the present. In relation to their hair, participants show the same symptomatic experience as parents because convictions on external markers are layered with connotations of the past. The process of doing hair could be regarded as a tool to transfer trauma based on the memory of acceptance parents had to go through to be regarded as

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human. Mbatha (2017) thus makes the case that born free's articulate indirect knowledge of the past through behaviour and attitudes, keeping the knowledge of the past, present, and future. The construct of hair and colourism thus becomes the mark of a multi-generational transmission with its origins in white supremacy (Mbatha, 2017).

4.3.3 Transition from a False into the True Self

Ashforth (2001) argues that identity transition involves a transformation process in self-definition, which often results from significant life events or changes in roles. In addition, Ibarra (2007) states that the self-definition process seeks to answer questions of "Who was I?" and "Who I will be in the future?" Based on participants' orientation to whiteness at Stellenbosch University, a transitioning process or journey may start that includes perceiving how being a Coloured is performed through external markers by others, and how it could be perceived and performed by the self. Participants' attitudes and existing beliefs about external markers of identity are questioned, and new perceptions are formed. In a way, transitioning from straightened to natural hair, or "going natural," might become both an affirmation of hair in its natural state and the self. Cornel, for example, observes that the natural hair journey is a critical reflection on body politics, stating that "*those who are critically thinking…about the politics of hair, even if they are doing it, they're doing it in an attempt to reclaim*." This final theme engages the transformation of the self and its implications by reflecting on the going natural journey and why some might regard it as an affirmation of their Colouredness, the self, and a rejection of whiteness.

4.3.3.1 The meaning of a new you in the journey of going natural. The journey of "going natural" started for most participants while at Stellenbosch University, thus during their young adult stage of identity development. Regarding literature on black (including Coloured) hair, the notion of transition from straight to natural hair is a prominent theme (Dawson et al., 2019; Erasmus, 1997; Ndichu & Upadhyaya, 2019; Norwood, 2015, 2018). In participants' recent experience, the going natural process does not just seem to happen but

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involves influences over a period. The journey of going natural, as described by participants, is often accompanied by a critical reflection on old valuations of their hair, constructions of their identity, and perspectives on these matters in general. The making and the re-making of their identity happened against an assumed normative standard that is being critiqued. However, going natural started at a definitive point in time for most participants (e.g., Freedom Day, Fees Must Fall, the second year of university); their transition is ultimately a continuing process. For example:

> *"I straightened my hair and I thought this is what I really wanted, but as soon as I stepped into University that's when I changed my hair." – Miguel, 25*

> *"So then I started to think like why do I need to do this? Is it necessary? Like is straight hair really that important and then I remember in second year, it was Freedom Day in second year, my friends and I, we decided to do a photoshoot on that day and one of the friends in the group, she had been natural for like a few years already. So then she decided to do my hair, she put some curl products on and I took the pictures just like that and that was the first time I did something like that. And I liked the way the pictures looked, and it was me with curly hair in pictures for the first time liking it, and from then on I decided, you know, this could actually work." - Kimberley, 21*

Participants' experiences can be interpreted as identity development or achievement—resolving a crisis or development task in adolescence and achieving transition into adulthood (Marcia, 1980). This identity achievement is one of the four non-sequential statuses in the psychological identity development of adolescence. For Marcia (1980), adolescents' status is determined by their choices and commitments regarding personal and social traits. The resolution of the crises, i.e., re-evaluating choices and values in different domains, and committing to a new or unique sense of identity, completes the transition into adolescence. The transition process typically has three phases: separation, transition (or liminal period), and integration (Dawson et al., 2019; Ibarra, 2007; van Gennep, 2004).

Resolving tasks could also be described as the part in identity transition referred to as the process of questioning (Ibarra, 2007; van Gennep, 2004). Questioning is an attempt to answer the questions "Who was I?" and "Who will I be in the future?", which could be followed by disengaging from a central identity (what hair should look like) and then

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integrating another ("curly hair could work") (Dawson et al., 2019). Because hair may be tied to identity, parts of the self were rejected through questioning values and beliefs about hair that previously informed identity construction and evaluation (Marcia, 1980). The critical reflection of the norms and beliefs that informs one's identity can result in the individuation from family and community. This individuation becomes central in the first of three transition phases, namely separation (Dawson et al., 2019; Ibarra, 2007; van Gennep, 2004). Thus after critical reflection, participants seem to engage in separation, in that they disengage or detach themselves from what was acceptable previously i.e., the old sense of self-determined by how they wore their hair) (Dawson et al., 2019).

For some of the participants, the process of going natural was not just about a new hairstyle (wearing hair natural or *kroes*) or hair care processes, but about reclaiming a Coloured identity that is true for them, which may have been lessened through the hair straightening processes. Participants tend to become aware of the Coloured self they actually embody and have always been. The journey seems to start in contestation of the other that is whiteness and its standards of beauty, and the self (embracing the suppressed part of Coloured identity). Participants appear to redefine what good and acceptable hair should be while embracing the parts of their oppressed identity. Kim describes her reclamation as follows:

> *"Curly hair has become a big part of my identity in who I am as a person, because I… Through, you know, like deciding to go natural, I decided to embrace me as a person, me as a coloured and to just take a stand against the ideals of beauty that are in the coloured community. So, me, I wear my hair natural, and I go through all this effort because I care about breaking those ideals, and I just want to help create awareness in the coloured community so that people start embracing their own hair, basically. Ja, so it's passive activism, I guess, for me."- Kim, 25*

The second phase in identity transition is the liminal phase, characterised by transitioning from a central identity (what hair should look like) while trying out new roles (Ibarra, 2007; van Gennep, 2004). During this phase, participants like Kim tried out new experiences with the styling of their natural/real hair. Participants express a new state of being, resolving the ambiguity, and uncertainty of a perceived identity inherited by conforming to

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whiteness. Going natural to reclaim their identity and rejecting whiteness, participants become conscientious and awakened to their self-worth and the need for activism to advocate for reform in the social identity (Biko, 2004; Hadfield, 2017; Kgatla, 2018). Participant actions can be interpreted as the realisation that their external markers of identity are valid forms of social capital in the embodied state, thus resolving the double consciousness. These markers were likely overlooked because of the value placed on whiteness.

4.3.3.2 Going natural as an affirmation of the self. Transitioning into the true self by embracing Coloured identity was often expressed as a form of activism for participants. Activism against the norms passed down to them and against whiteness as a standard of beauty, thereby reclaiming an intrinsic worth assigned to the self. The transition seems to occur internally and externally, likely affirming and reclaiming *kroes* hair deemed unacceptable, unruly, and a residual Coloured identity (Chutel, 2018). In this context, hair is often linked to skin colour, thus used to resist imposed ideas of Western/European beauty and promote a black anti-racist and prejudice aesthetic. Affirming their Coloured identity, going natural could be a conscious process of changing perspectives, which, in turn, creates an awareness or enlightenment of the self. For example, this affirmation is evident in Miguel and Kimberley's experiences:

> "*I just shaved all of my hair, and I was like okay, I just want to be bald… I don't want any hair anymore, because this is causing my mental health to be unstable. And then afterwards when my hair replenished, I realised okay but this is actually what I like about myself, it's a… What do you call it? It's a part of me that really spoke to me and my culture, but also in the coloured community…"-Miguel, 22*

> *"Through, you know, like deciding to go natural, I decided to embrace me as a person, me as a coloured and to just take a stand against the ideals of beauty that are in the coloured community. So me, I wear my hair natural, and I go through all this effort because I care about breaking those ideals, and I just want to help create awareness in the coloured community so that people start embracing their own hair, basically. Ja, so it's passive activism, I guess, for me" -Kimberley, 21*

The final stage in identity transition that forms part of the process of evolution and self-definition is integration (Ibarra, 2007; van Gennep, 2004). When the individual establishes a new sense of self, integration occurs (Dawson et al., 2019; Ibarra, 2007; van

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Gennep, 2004). For participants, the new sense of self appears to be the self without expectations of conforming or assimilating. Affirming the natural self is healthy and adds to mental well-being.

The new sense of self tends to be congruent with the aims of movements like the Black Consciousness movement, AMAFROCOL (from Colombia), Going Natural (Global), and the *Kroes* Rocks movement, in that it portrays confidence and "Coloured pride" bringing about liberation (Asociation de Mujeres Afrocolombianas [AMAFROCOL], 2018; Biko, 2004; Hadfield, 2017; Kgatla, 2018; Ndichu & Upadhyaya, 2019). Finding the self is likely a form of rejection of white beauty standards but also cultural resistance against the continued symbolic violence committed through the perceptions of natural black hair (Chutel, 2018; Erasmus, 2000; Kelley, 1997). For participants, wearing their hair natural created a discourse that affirms the self while accepting their natural hair as an expression of Colouredness and as a legitimate embodied marker of identity that is part of the process of creolization.

4.4. Conclusion

Although hair texture and skin complexion do not have inherent meaning, they are often socialised in ways that convey more than just aesthetics features. Both these external markers essentially can become part of and represent the identity itself. This chapter gave an account of the experiences of 10 self-identifying Coloured students at Stellenbosch University regarding hair, colourism, and the construction of their identity. Furthermore, the chapter used descriptive phenomenology as an interpretive framework to interpret their experiences and the factors that have influenced Coloured identity, specifically at an HWI such as Stellenbosch University. Based on the analysis of the data, the study identified three main themes, namely, (i) Existing in a predominantly white space, (ii) Hairarchy, and (iii) Transition into True Self.

First, the data suggest that existing in a predominantly white space may require Coloured participants to apply acculturation strategies, like assimilation and alternation. Motivations to study at a predominantly white institution include being well-resourced,

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offering academic esteem, and more significant resources. Participants also seem to express a need to invalidate hurtful racial stereotypes about Coloured identity at HBUs.

Quite a few participants acknowledged the acquisition of cultural capital, as they come from previous Model-C schools and appears to be comfortable in white spaces. Nevertheless, being in white spaces could create cognitive dissonance, as the sense of belonging in the class experience may be outweighed by alienation when others do not celebrate their Colouredness. Because the institutional culture remains white, students of colour are likely to feel pressured to assimilate by changing their language preferences, attitudes, values, and mannerisms to fit the dominant culture. Social events and activities that celebrate institutional culture appears to leave students of colour feeling alienated and othered. Participants appear to utilise mimicry and cross-cultural code-switching as coping mechanisms to alternate between their culture and whiteness and to be found worthy in the eyes of whiteness. Participants would alternate out of fear of rejection and to negate the negative perceptions that Coloured people believe others have of them.

Second, the analysis indicated that a hairarchy exists that could afford social status to a person of colour based on their hair and has conditions (straight hair) that ought to be met to be valued and have a positive social experience. Hair prejudice and colour(ism) in relation to identity that seem to stem from past connotations of Coloured identity, however, and how external markers were used to assign worth to the apartheid racial hierarchy. Like before, whiteness is likely to inform external markers of identity in that the whiter you can become at Stellenbosch University, the more aesthetically pleasing or desirable you become. For example, a lighter skin tone with a straighter type or hair texture could give the Coloured student favour that can be equated to a level of whiteness. Nevertheless, the pathologic pursuit of attaining such levels of whiteness through straightening practices has adverse effects on Coloured identity that creates contention within the self. The dichotomy that arises creates anxiety in the process of identity formation, resulting in the dissonance between who

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participants are and whom they must become, embodying external white attributes to be regarded worthy.

Participants recognised that the way they were socialised in styling their hair (approximating whiteness) was done by female socialisation agents and accepted as normative. Conditions of worth appear to be internalized through socialisation, as these conditions to measure value seem to be informed by the past. The trauma experienced by previous generations (physical conditions of worth) is reproduced through different straightening rituals/cultural practices and socialisation processes (measures of worth), which connects the past to the present through the representation of Coloured identity. Although participants suffer as their hair is made into meaning, it exposes who they are or what they are not, when the hair *mins*, i.e., is exposed to moisture.

Lastly, the analysis identified that many participants experienced a transition from a false into a perceived true self through going natural. The journey of transitioning from straight to natural hair created a discourse that affirmed their Coloured self amid whiteness at Stellenbosch University. Through critical reflection of the norms and beliefs that informed participants' identities, they experienced individuation at Stellenbosch University, leading them to embrace and reclaim their natural *kroes* hair and what they believe their Coloured identity should be. This transition also resolved the ambiguities and uncertainties that were inherited by conforming to whiteness, seemingly affirming the Coloured identity that was believed to be lessened and integrating natural hair and expressions of the self.

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CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This research study examined whether and in what ways students who identify as Coloured ascribe to whiteness, particularly concerning embodied markers of identity at an HWI in democracy. In addition, the research aimed to answer the question around what the potential factors could be that facilitate the decision to ascribe to or reject whiteness. However, understanding whiteness or the relevance thereof in democracy asks for a reflection on the past.

The system of apartheid brought about a hierarchy informed by pseudo-biology and a racist ideology that determined the social, political, and economic power of the South African population. Identity thus became very racialised, with race categories or classifications (e.g., white, black, Coloured) determined by external markers of appearance. Coloured citizens' value and social mobility were determined partly by having the right external markers, like softer hair and a fairer skin complexion. There is thus a positive association between hair and colourism, on the one hand, and worth and status on the other, in that the closer hair and skin complexion is to the white ideal (level of whiteness), the better a Coloured person's social status could be. Hair and skin complexion are thus imbued with social and political power.

For Adhikari (2005), many post-apartheid Coloured people often feel that during apartheid, they were not white enough and now, they are not black enough. This binary and reductionist notion of being often leave Coloured identity wanting because the narrative of the identity remains "founded" on the assumption or denotes an intermediate social status. The intermediate social status that Coloured people had regarded them as better than black, less than white people, and afforded relative oppression under apartheid due to Coloured people's ability to assimilation. Thus, though the assumption that the identity is made and remade by the people themselves is broadly true (Erasmus, 2001), one should be aware of the conscious manipulation of perceptions and emotions under white supremacy and the post-apartheid environment or communities that value whiteness. In these communities or HWIs, such as

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universities, to affirm their humanity, the person of colour has to adopt white values through assimilation or alternation to belong and be accepted. The assimilation or alternation often happens at the expense of Coloured students own social identity out of feelings of inferiority and the desire to fit in.

The analysis of participant experiences at an HWI indicated that the motivations to enrol at Stellenbosch University include participants' affiliation with previous educational institutions, that were also HWIs, not wanting to confirm Coloured stereotypes, and their continued social whitening (integration into white networks). Coloured participants are likely not just placed on a racial hierarchy, but their social status or worth within this hierarchy could also be assigned to them based on their hair style or type. A hairarchy is thus formed through external markers, i.e., hair and skin complexion, based on the Coloured communities' perception of what constitutes acceptable hair.

Having straight hair and a lighter complexion could give you some esteem that can be equated to a level of whiteness. This level of whiteness appears to be an example of historic, racialised standards of beauty and being entangled with external markers and how it has influenced and continues to inform Coloured identity. This internalisation of whiteness regarding hair and skin complexion appears to be facilitated through social agents through socialisation processes. This socialisation process likely transfers trauma from the older to the new generation based on the memory of past experiences of worth and value under white supremacy.

Consequently, with whiteness experienced as the dominant culture, the institutional culture could influence Coloured students to act white by assimilating or alternating through mimicry. This possible submission, through alternation and assimilation to the dominance of whiteness, could other them, whilst possibly lessening their degree of Colouredness (Du Bois, 1903; Molinsky, 2007). Mimicry or cross-cultural code-switching appears to be utilised as coping mechanisms to survive or fit in and can be anything from speaking Afrikaans instead

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of *Kaaps*, grouping together, not talking at all, or having selective word use, in essence policing their own behaviour. The decision to orientate to whiteness in this way seems to be accepted by the system due to the perceptions that Coloured people believe others have about them, the stereotypical "guise of the white man," and the perceived need to refute these (Barroso, 2015; Fanon, 1970, p. 154).

The pathologic pursuit to be white through external markers could cause an internal conflict of the self or double consciousness (Du Bois, 1903; Molinsky, 2007). Nevertheless, the appropriation of whiteness may lead to the recognition of the alternate-self causing conflict within parts of Coloured identity, forcing the Coloured students to reject white ideals and standards or embrace their Colouredness for what it is. Regarding hair, the embrace of their Coloured identity is facilitated by a reflection of the self and the evaluations of hair prejudice. This reflection of value systems and constructions of being prompt a transition into the Coloured person they ought to be, going natural, embracing their external markers, thus affirming who and what they are. The assimilation or alternation to whiteness allows Coloured students to acquire social capital to navigate the HWI better. However, the same acquisition over time makes students reject whiteness and embrace what they perceive to be their true identity. For example, Kim (25) reflects on how she was never regarded as pretty if her "fudge head" was not straightened and how she was taught that straight hair is the acceptable standard because it "*is very close to whiteness."* However, as she calls it, the internalised struggle or *"the dichotomy of being"* made her realise that whiteness is a standard that she will never fully achieve. As a result of this, Kim embraces who she is and what her hair represents, rejecting whiteness through going natural because "*[she] mean[s] [her] kroes hair is an expression of who [she is]."*

The study's findings contribute to the growing body of literature on the construction of Coloured identity, in particular adding to the paucity of literature on Coloured identity construction at HWIs. It should be stated because participants' experiences are interpreted as

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finding or coming into their true identity, it does not mean that what they are suggesting is a quintessential Coloured identity, nor that such a construct exists. What it does mean is that there is a subjective perception of what Colouredness entails and drawing from this understanding an evaluation is made with regards to constructs such as hair, skin tone and whiteness. Furthermore, it adds to the knowledge about the perpetuation of colourism and hair prejudice post-apartheid South African context. Much is written on hair and colourism from an American perspective, but not a lot reflects South African reality. The fact that this research focused on the South African reality is of utmost importance because past expressions and constructions of identity still form part of current social experiences. To reduce any individual to their hair texture and skin complexion, or to say that these embodied markers of identity are the only identifiers that constitute identity, is essentialist and racist at best. However, failure to recognise the role that such external markers play in the process of identity formation would be a serious omission. It is thus important to reflect on external markers to dismantle whiteness and promote it in historically white spaces. Our inability to critically engage with subjects like hair prejudice, colourism, and the pain of the past that is often perpetuated through these markers within Coloured communities and white spaces, will add further contention to a misunderstood social identity.

Although the construction of Coloured identity does not happen within the essentialist or instrumentalist school of thought, these conceptualisations still form part of its expression today. The trauma experienced by generations through racialised evaluations of worth under apartheid is shown in the reflective process, facilitated by social agents, which connects the past to the present through representations and imagination. The meaning of hair negotiated through socialisation, construction, and experience moves from mere psychological and physical trauma to cultural trauma. The individual can thus experience trauma as a cultural process mediated through collective memory and identity (Mbatha, 2017). Failure to acknowledge and make sense of the effects of whiteness on external markers of identity and

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the presentation of collective memory can lead to the perpetuation of symbolic violence, loss of meaningful understanding of social identity, and biased privilege favouring whiteness and further oppressing Colouredness.

5.1. Limitations

The data findings are relevant in understanding Coloured student experiences and their construction of identity at an HWI. However, a few limitations should be addressed. The study was guided by the ongoing social justice natural hair movements that prompted participants that "went natural" with their hair to share their stories. Based on this, one cannot assume that all Coloured students at Stellenbosch University wear their hair in a natural or *kroes* form, which is not the case. A more diverse sample of participants in terms of hair texture/strand could thus have resulted in a richer discussion on colourism, hair, and the construction of identity at HWIs. The findings might thus be more applicable to those who do not have naturally straight hair or engaged in straightening practices and those who regard their hair as a fundamental part of their Coloured identity and have since decided to embrace their natural *kroes* hair. However, the orientation to whiteness through mimicry or cross-cultural code-switching might look different regarding external markers for those who have naturally straight hair.

Furthermore, on the issue of participation, the study also lacked the participation of more male respondents. The lack of heterosexual males could prove that the struggle with hair and colourism is interconnected with gender. However, more participants that identify as heterosexual men could provide more substantial empirical evidence on the intersectionality of hair and colourism with gender. The participant who was gender fluid and the one who was homosexual noted that hair is important to them but that it is a more concerning matter for females, considering the lengths they must go through to straighten their hair. The study could thus not determine the extent to which heterosexual males are affected through and by straightening themselves.

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Thirdly, the method of data collection, Zoom, proved to be helpful for doing qualitative research. However, in using the method, there are a few challenges that need to be considered. First, in South Africa, one needs to consider issues like load shedding and internet connectivity. Load shedding inadvertently affects the interview process negatively, especially when participants and interviewer are not on the same load shedding schedule. As a result of load shedding, two interviews had to be rescheduled for a time and date suitable to both the researcher and the participant. In addition to load shedding, another challenge would have to be internet connectivity. Not all internet service providers provide a stable connection. A stable connection on both sides results in a better-quality interview and recording where nothing is lost in translation. Some recordings did suffer from poor audio, although this did not significantly impact the quality of data collection.

5.2. Recommendations for Future Studies

Given the limitations of this study, it is recommended that future studies look at the following aspects to broaden the scope of the work. The results suggest that an inquiry is warranted, particularly into the intergenerational transfer of trauma within the Coloured community. A further investigation is required into how intergenerational trauma is suffered through prejudice and negative stereotypes connected to hair and colourism and how these inform identity at a communal level. The investigation of the transfer of intergenerational trauma should be accompanied by a study on how socialisation happens, but also how specific customs, norms, and ideologies, skills, and habits are transferred and why. More so, what beliefs are transferred regarding how Colouredness should operate in the presence of whiteness at an HWI. Participants' experiences highlight a need to understand how Coloured identity was constructed and perceived through external markers during apartheid and what elements it adds to today's construction of the social identity. A follow-up study might benefit from a systematic approach where primary social agents, e.g., parents and grandparents are consulted to understand how they were socialised regarding assumptions of hair prejudice,

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colourism, and the perception of the other. A systematic study to understand how these constructs influenced their identity and why they transferred certain opinions, perspectives, and beliefs to their children.

Secondly, with the formation of identity in mind, the research also calls for a review of institutional culture, particularly the rituals and practices that establish institutional identity. For example, the Res-culture that includes white Afrikaner rituals, like having *Sêr* or *Vensters*, should be reviewed and reformed to be more inclusive of other social identities. This research study thus calls for social justice by reforming the institutional culture through informing policies aimed at transformation. This study can also be used as an indicator to evaluate current events, (establishments, groups, songs, etc.) that form part of the Matie culture and life in residence. Furthermore, this research study could also be used as a starting point to establish secondary research projects to target specific aspects of social identities and their orientation at the HWI. The institutional culture of Stellenbosch University often creates situations in which the Coloured student is othered and alienated. What is considered a rite of passage or social event at the university, to create a sense of belonging, should be sensitive to all social groups and include elements that celebrate diversity.

5.3. Conclusion

This research study explored the experiences of self-identifying Coloured students and how they construct their identity regarding external identity markers at an HWI. More specifically, the study investigated whether and in what ways young self-identifying Coloured students assimilate or feel pressure to assimilate to what are considered to be white norms at an HWI concerning their external appearance. Based on a thematic analysis of participants experiences, it can be concluded that Coloured students orientate to whiteness at Stellenbosch University by appropriating whiteness through assimilation and alternation for a better social experience. The current perceptions of external markers and the value these hold, are formed by past experiences, and transferred through socialisation from one generation to another.

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These perceptions of older generations could thus create a hairarchy through external markers, i.e., hair and skin complexion, that could be suggestive of what is acceptable and how worth is assigned. Having straight hair and a lighter complexion could provide you with social capital, equated to a level of whiteness. However, through alternation and assimilation, the student's submission to the dominance of whiteness, others them and lessens their Coloured identity (Du Bois, 1903; Molinsky, 2007). The students that identify as Coloured realised that the pathologic pursuit of being white through external markers is unattainable and cause an internal conflict in the self or double consciousness (Du Bois, 1903; Molinsky, 2007). The students resolve the ambiguity and uncertainty in their identity caused by conforming to whiteness by embracing their natural hair. The embrace of their external markers, also described as going natural, affirm student's Coloured identity as they critically reflect on value systems and constructions of being, prompting the transition into the true/real Coloured. An inability to critically engage with subjects like hair prejudice, colourism, and the pain of the past that is often perpetuated through these markers within Coloured communities and white spaces, will add further contention to an already misunderstood and marginalised social identity.

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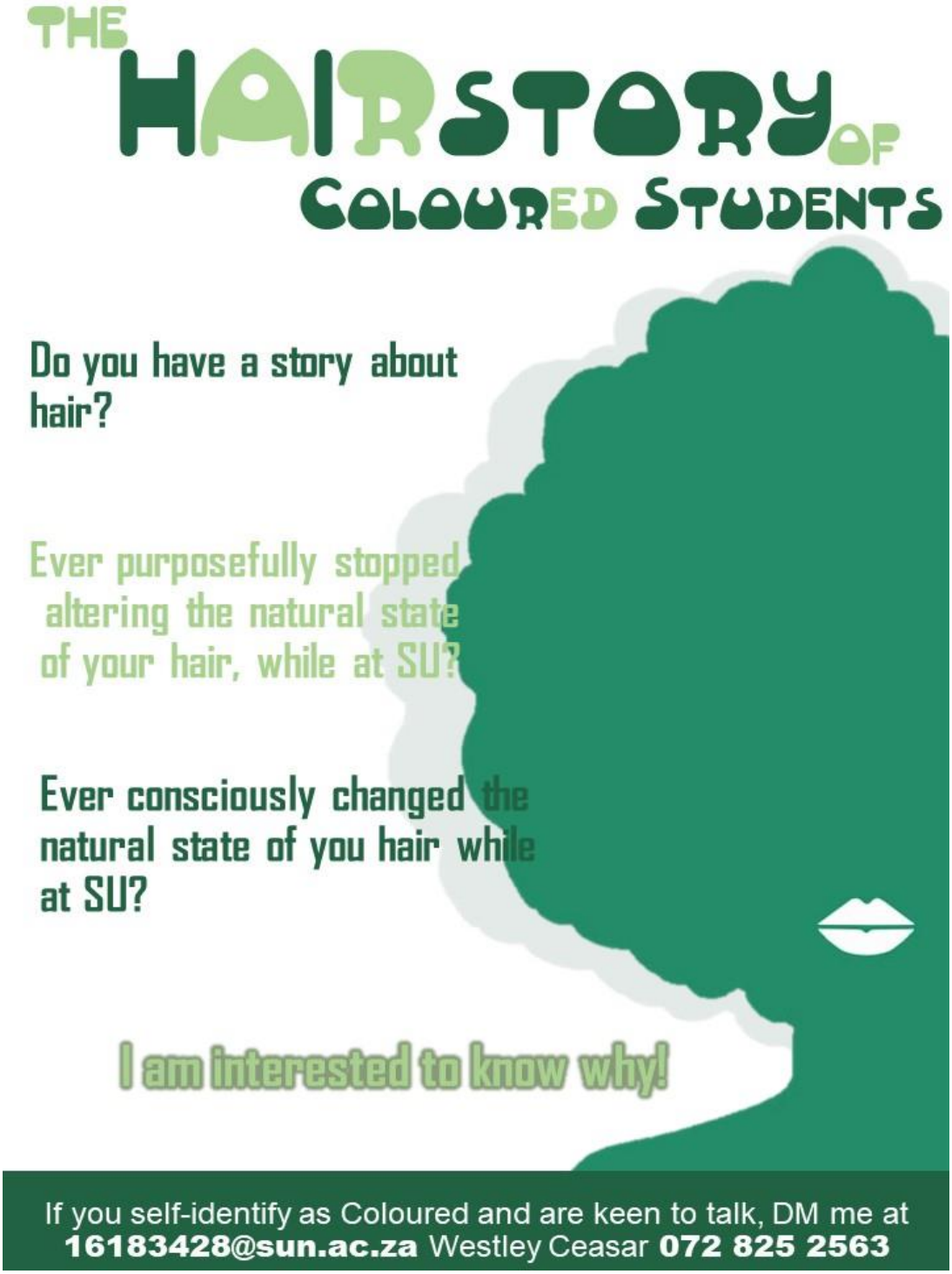
APPENDICES

Appendix A
Poster / Advertisement



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THE HAIRSTORY OF COLOURED STUDENTS

Do you have a story about hair?

Ever purposefully stopped altering the natural state of your hair, while at SU?

Ever consciously changed the natural state of your hair while at SU?

I am interested to know why!

If you self-identify as Coloured and are keen to talk, DM me at **16183428@sun.ac.za** Westley Ceasar **072 825 2563**

This is a research study for my MA Psychology degree

(Research Ethics Number: 11549)

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Appendix B

Telephonic screening questionnaire

Are you a student at SU?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

Do you self-identify as a Coloured person?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

Do you have a story about hair?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

Have you ever purposefully stopped altering the natural state of your hair, while at SU?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

Have you ever consciously changed the natural state of your hair while at SU?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

What age are you now? _____

Which of the following interview methods do you prefer?

- ❍ Face-to-face
- ❍ IMIM

**If IMIM is selected continue with questions, if the participants chose Face-to-face, then go directly to contact details.*

Do you have access to the internet?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

Do you have a stable internet connection?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

Which of the following will you use to connect to the internet?

- ❍ Mobile Data
- ❍ WIFI

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Who is your data service provider? (For data compensation)

_____

_____

Do you have access to a laptop or smart device that can download applications from the internet?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

Which VoIP platform do you prefer?

- ❍ Zoom
- ❍ Skype
- ❍ WhatsApp

*** Please note by selecting a VoIP platform, reading the Consent form, and scheduling an online meeting, you consent to the conditions as stated in the Consent form. You also acknowledge that video and audio will be recorded.*

Contact details / User ID

_____

_____

Possible times and dates for interview

_____

_____

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Appendix C

Informed Consent

UNIVERSITEIT·STELLENBOSCH·UNIVERSITY

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

You are being asked to take part in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study and seeks your authorization for the collection, use and disclosure of your personal response data, as well as other information necessary for the study. The Principal Investigator (the person in charge of this research) will also describe this study to you and answer all your questions. Your participation is entirely voluntary. Before you decide whether to take part, read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand. By participating in this study, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you would otherwise be entitled.

1. Title of Research Study

Hairstory: Exploring Coloured students' experiences and expression of identity at a Historically White institution

2. Principal Investigator and Telephone Number(s)

Mr Westley Ceasar
16183428@sun.ac.za /072 825 2563
Department of Psychology
University of Stellenbosch

3. What is the purpose of this research study?

The purpose of this research is to collect information about how individuals perceive and construct their identity at a Historically White Institution.

4. What will be done if you take part in this research study?

You will be interviewed to obtain information about your personal experiences and thoughts.

5. If you choose to participate in this study, how long will you be expected to participate in the research?

The interview will last between 30-60 minutes. Face-to-face interviews will start off with the self-identification questionnaire, whereas with mobile instant messaging interviews (MIMIs), participants will be required to complete the demographic and the self-identification questionnaires beforehand, then send this back, in a digital format, either before or after the interview.

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If at any time during the face-to-face or MIMI you find that any of the questions cause you discomfort or anxiety, you are free to discontinue your participation without penalty. In the event of withdrawal, you will be provided with the option to either destroy your consent form and data (for both the recorded interview and questionnaires) or allow it to be used as is, in the final write up.

6. How many people are expected to participate in the research?

10-20

7. What are the possible discomforts and risks?

There are no known risks associated with participating in this study. However, participants will be asked to share personal experiences about race and identity, which could put them in a vulnerable position. If during and after the study, you feel distressed, we will talk with you and give you a referral for care if necessary.

Should any participant experience any psychological distress or further need to discuss their experiences as a result of participation in this study, you may make use of the free counselling services offered by Stellenbosch University's Centre for Student Counselling and Development (contact number: 021 808 4707). In addition, you may make use of the free counselling services offered by Welgevallen Community Psychology Clinic (contact number: 021 808 2696).

8. What are the possible benefits to you?

You may or may not personally benefit from participating in this study. Personally, you would have an opportunity to share your experience in a safe space. This experience could lead to improved knowledge and understanding of complex social phenomena, e.g., social identities, colorism and have a positive effect on future students at Stellenbosch University.

9. What are the possible benefits to others?

The information from this study will help us to better understand how young people born after 1994 perceive and construct their social identity at Historically White institutions. The data collected will contribute to the knowledge base in social psychology, and will be published in peer-reviewed, accredited scientific journals.

10. If you choose to take part in this research study, will it cost you anything?

Participating in this study will not cost you anything.

11. Will you receive compensation for taking part in this research study?

As compensation for your time when taking part in this study, you will receive R50. Should you choose a virtual interview, you will have the option to choose either the R50 or 1GB of data.

12. Once information is collected, how will it be kept secret (confidential) in order to protect your privacy?

VoIP platforms/applications will encrypt recorded data, which essentially renders data into code that prevent unauthorised access. Nevertheless, privacy becomes a challenge when it

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comes to the internet and identifiers. VoIP platforms/applications requires users to provide certain personal information, that could lead to data potentially being reidentifiable. However, reidentifiable data will not be used in the transcription of video and audio into text. Information collected will be stored in locked filing cabinets in the Historical Trauma and Transformation offices (in the case of face-to-face interviews) and on the principal investigator's computer.

Once data has been recorded and saved to a computer, files containing data will be password protected and backed-up on a hard drive, and locked in the same cabinet as the original hardcopy data. Only my supervisor and I (Principal Investigator) will have the access to the data and to review these research records. Your research records (that include audio, video and text) will not be released without your permission, unless required by law or a court order.

Despite security measures, by consenting to the research, you understand that online communications may be at greater risk for third party (hacking, intrusions, and other) violations. In particular, it is difficult to assess whether digital data is used and analysed by big I.T. companies, like Facebook Limited (WhatsApp), Skype, and Microsoft, which opens up the possibility of unauthorized third parties.

13. What information about you may be collected, used and shared with others?

The information gathered from you will be some demographic details, as well as your personal thoughts and experiences. Your data may assist further research; however, your personal details will not be shared with others. That is, no information that directly identifies you (e.g., name) will be linked to your data.

All collected information will remain confidential throughout the research process by assigning random participant numbers and pseudonyms during the transcription and analysis of the data.

14. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. By signing the consent form, and by scheduling an MIMI, you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. Upon withdrawal to the study, participants will have the option to allow the information provided to be used as is or be destroyed. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact Ms. Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

15. Signatures

As a representative of this study, I have explained to the participant the purpose, the procedures, the possible benefits, and the risks of this research study, and how the participant's interview and other data will be collected, used, and shared with others:

_____ _____

Signature of Person Consenting and Authorization Date

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You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks; and how your interview and other data will be collected, used and shared with others. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time.

You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. You hereby authorize the collection, use and sharing of your interview and other data. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

_____ _____

Signature of Person Obtaining consent and Authorizing Date

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Compensation Declaration

I hereby declare that I received as compensation for my participation in the following research study: “Hairstory: Exploring Coloured students’ experiences and expression of identity at a Historically White Institution”, of the Department of Psychology, Stellenbosch University.

Please select ☒ your form of compensation:

☐ R50 (Face-to-face) ☐ 1 GB Data (MIMI)

_____ _____

Signature (participant) Date

_____ _____

Signature (researcher) Date

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Appendix D

Demographic Details

Please answer each of the following questions relating to your demographic information as accurately as possible.

1. Are you a South African citizen?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

2. Are you comfortable completing the interview in English?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

3. How would you like to be identified in terms of race/population group, if a different option was available?

_____

4. What is your home language? _____

5. What is your gender?

- ❍ Male
- ❍ Female
- ❍ Other

6. Are you religious? If yes, please specify:

_____

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Appendix E

Please read each question carefully and respond as honestly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers, we are simply interested to learn about your views and experiences. Your responses will be held completely confidential. All questions relate to South African people.

How strongly do you agree with the following statements?

☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Strongly disagree				***Strongly agree***

1. I feel a bond with Coloured people.
2. I feel solidarity with Coloured people.
3. I feel committed to Coloured people.
4. I am glad to be Coloured.
5. I think that Coloured people have a lot to be proud of.
6. It is pleasant to be a Coloured person.
7. Being a Coloured person gives me a good feeling.
8. I often think about the fact that I am a Coloured person.
9. The fact that I am Coloured person is an important part of my identity.
10. Being a Coloured person is an important part of how I see myself.
11. I have a lot in common with the average Coloured person.
12. I am similar to the average Coloured person.
13. Coloured people have a lot in common with each other.
14. Coloured people are very similar to each other.

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Appendix F

Interview Schedule

1. Personal identity

- Tell me about yourself.
- What does it mean to be a Coloured person in contemporary South Africa?
- What, according to you, are the markers of a Coloured person? I.e., what does a Coloured person look like?
- Are your views on being a Coloured person shared by family, friends or community? I.e. how do people in your community talk about Coloured people?

2. Institutional identity

- Why did you choose to come and study at SU?
- What do you like about being at SU and what do you find challenging about being at SU?
- *"In his remarks in a portfolio committee for higher education and training on Stellenbosch University (SU) in 2015, Minister Blade Nzimande referred to SU as a Historically White Institution:"* Have you ever experienced something on campus that makes you aware of race? Please elaborate.
- How do you feel about being a Coloured person at SU?
- What do you do as a Coloured person to operate in this *Historically (actually contemporary) White* space?
    - *Have you ever found yourself changing something about yourself to fit in? Probe: Are you familiar with the term code-switching? Do you ever do it?*

["Cross-cultural code-switching is identified as the act of purposefully modifying one's behaviour in an interaction in a foreign setting in order to accommodate different cultural norms for appropriate behaviour"]

- The person that you described earlier, are you able to be that person at SU?

3. Embodied markers of identity

Colorism

- In your opinion, if you could change the shade of your skin tone, would you and how?
- How would this affect your experiences at SU? Why?

Hair

- How would you describe your hair?
- You have just described your hair to me as …, could you tell me what it has been like for you to have your type of hair at SU? Probe: Does it mean anything to you or others?

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Appendix G

Translations of Quotations

Lauren, Pg 66

"Dit, soos jy kan sien is, kyk soms voel dit glad, as ek iets aan smeer. As ek niks aan smeer nie, voel dit bietjie kroes. Maar my hare voel vol, dit voel leka, want dis lekker bouncy, soos as jy net, jy weet, dit voel soos n spons. veral soos nou, nou voel dit soos n spons, maar as dit nat is voel dit weer voel dit weer lekker sag en ja. Veral as dit so curls maak as dit nat is dan voel dit leka, maar andersins voel my hare nie te kroes nie, dit voel net reg, dit voel soos ek dit wil hê."

"This as you can see is, you see sometimes when I put something on, it feels straight. If I don't put on something, it feels coarse. But my hair feels full, nice, because its bouncy, like if you know, you know it feels like a sponge especially like now. But if it is wet it feels soft and nice again. Especially when it makes curls, then it feels nice, but other than that, my hair doesn't feel too coarse it feels just right like I want it."

Lauren, Pg 74

Ek het al baie kere dit beleef. Soos even by skakels soos ek dit genoem het, by skakels en soos by meetings waar wanneer ek miskien, 'n vraag vra tydens die meeting of so, dan sal ek mooier Afrikaans wil praat sodat ek nie so hoef te brei nie, soos ek nou praat nie. Ja want gewoonlik as ek praat, soos ek se 'djy' en 'djou' en so, terwyl ander soos 'jy' en 'jou' en dan sal ek altyd so praat soos 'jy' en 'julle' net om my aksent te verander, net om te wil in te pas by hulle [wit mense]. En ek sal my houding of die manier hoe ek dinge doen ook soms verander net om in te pas." – Lauren, 22

"I have experienced it a lot of times. Like even at skakels as I mentioned before, at skakels and social meetings where when, say I have a question during a meeting or so, then I would want to speak a better Afrikaans so that I don't have to show my burr accent, like I'm speaking now. Because normally when I would speak, I would say 'djy' en 'djou' and so, while others use 'jy' en 'jou' and then I would also speak like that, just to change my accent, so that I can fit in with them [white people]. And I would change my attitude or the way I do thing things sometimes just to fit in" – Lauren, 22

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Appendix H

REC Ethical Clearance

UNIVERSITEIT STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

NOTICE OF APPROVAL

REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (SBER) - Initial Application Form

26 May 2020

Project number: 11549

Project Title: Hairstory: Exploring Coloured students' experiences and expression of identity at a historically White institution

Dear Mr Westley Ceasar

Your response to stipulations submitted on 11 May 2020 was reviewed and approved by the REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (REC: SBE).

Please note below expiration date of this approved submission:

Ethics approval period:

Protocol approval date (Humanities)	Protocol expiration date (Humanities)
6 May 2020	5 May 2021

GENERAL COMMENTS:

1. SUSPENSION OF PHYSICAL CONTACT RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AT SU

There is a **postponement of all physical contact research activities at Stellenbosch University,** apart from research that can be conducted remotely/online and requires no human contact, and research in those areas specifically acknowledged as essential services by the South African government under the presidential regulations related to COVID-19 (e.g. clinical studies).

Remote (desktop-based/online) research activities, online analyses of existing data, and the writing up of research results are strongly encouraged in all SU research environments.

Please read the REC notice for suspension of physical contact research during the COVID-19 pandemic: http://www.sun.ac.za/english/research-innovation/Research-Development/Documents/REC-COVID-19

If you are required to amend your research methods due to this suspension, please submit an amendment to the REC: SBE as soon as possible. The instructions on how to submit an amendment to the REC can be found on this webpage: [instructions], or you can contact the REC Helpdesk for instructions on how to submit an amendment: applyethics@sun.ac.za.

INVESTIGATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: SBE, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.

Please use your SU project number (11549) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD

You are required to submit a progress report to the REC: SBE before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

Once you have completed your research, you are required to submit a final report to the REC: SBE for review.

Included Documents:

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version